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# ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

FROM THE FRENCH OF

G. LENOTRE

AUTHOR OF "THE FLIGHT OF MARIE ANTOINETTE," ETC.

BY

FREDERIC LEES

*With many Illustrations*

VOL. II



LONDON

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# PORTRAITS OF WOMEN

## I

### MADemoiselle MONTANSIER

IN one of the rooms of the private apartments of Louis XV. in the Château of Versailles, a movable panel in the wood-work gives access to a small closet hardly three feet square—just room for a man to sit comfortably. It is, properly speaking, a cupboard, lighted by a peephole so artfully hidden between two pillars of the façade as to be invisible from outside. This cupboard is called Louis XV.'s prying place. The King used to sit there to see—without being seen himself—the people who crossed the courtyard, and that amused him. In this enormous palace where there are rows upon rows of galleries and *salons*, and where you may walk nearly three leagues without passing twice through the same room, the master had no place but this cupboard that was really his own. There he would sit without moving; his hands on his knees and his nose against the glass, and nothing can give us a better idea of the overwhelming boredom which oppressed the poor, idle, and wearied man. Yet everyone did his best to amuse him. As he liked "risky" stories, he was provided every week with a detailed account of the doings of the "fast world" of Paris. The police was employed in drawing up these reports, and this nasty collection was regularly forwarded to the King. It amused him; he liked to come across the names of gentlemen of his Court. Perhaps he found there some excuse for his own vicious habits.

These reports, beautifully written on fine paper, are



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preserved in the Arsenal Library. They are composed in a bright, attractive style, without any picking of words, and are duly spiced to suit the jaded palate which was to taste this curious literature. Here is one, dated September 24th, 1756, which we have modestly expurgated—and thereby reduced it by a good half:—

“The Demoiselle Brunet de Montansier, Rue St. Thomas du Louvre, is twenty-eight to thirty years of age, originally from Provence, and, if she is to be believed, the daughter of an advocate. She has been known on the Paris streets since 1748, but history does not relate that she had ever made any brilliant conquest when M. Burson, Councillor of the Third Court, then living in the Rue de Condé, fell in with her. Believing that he was loved by this young woman—who was always pretty cunning—he became attached to her; and in 1749, when he received an appointment at Martinique, he took her with him. The number of pranks she played him, disgusted him at last, and he left her entirely: though they had separated and come together again many times before.

“She started in business as a milliner at San Domingo, but the climate there is not suited to that trade, so she returned to France. She reappeared on our horizon early in the year 1754, and as she was acquainted with the country, she took care not to arrive looking out of luck. Two big negroes, dressed in blue, who followed her everywhere, a footman, two maids, and a carriage hired by the month, made her pass for a rich American, and thanks to this handsome outfit, she found, as is usual in Paris, plenty of credit and plenty of dupes. Verrier, the upholsterer, who certainly does not belong to that class, nevertheless furnished her an apartment in the Rue St. Honoré, over the pork-butcher’s at the corner of the Rue Neuve du Luxembourg, on the third floor. It was rather high up for such a princess, but what else could be done? She must live somewhere.

“At present, the persons with whom she principally associates are: Comte d’Esparbès, Marquis de Souvré, Marquis de Jonsac, Chevalier de Bezons, Marquis de Seignelai, Marquis de Ximenès, Comte de Villegagnion, M. de Puységur, the young Duc de la Trémoille, M. de Viarme, son of the King’s Councillor, M Thiroux de Montregard, and a number of others whose names have escaped the vigilance of Mme. Aubouy, and her daughter

Mme. Castoldy, to whom we are in great part indebted for the list we have given. Moreover, Mlle. Montansier is not obdurate—she seeks opportunities to extend her conquests from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole, though it may be doubted whether she has made much money. All her brilliant surroundings are very superficial, and though she has a carriage by the month, a footman, a lady's maid, and a cook, it is not believed that she is at all well off. She gives a supper-party at her house every night, and usually the guests do not separate till three or four in the morning. These supper-parties are very much liked by the Marquis de Souvré, who is always there.

“Demoiselle de Montansier is of ordinary height, tolerably well made, white skin, rather good eyes, nose a trifle large, pretty mouth, talks and pronounces well, nice bust and hands, and is amusing.”<sup>1</sup>

This young woman, who showed such a disposition for gallant adventures, was not—as she liked to make out—the daughter of an advocate. She was named Marguerite Brunet, was born at Bayonne in 1730, and her father was a modest pin-maker.<sup>2</sup>

We have read the story of her *début*, and, no doubt, started on such a good road, she would never have acquired a place in history if at one of the turnings she had not met a twentieth-rate actor—Honoré Bourdon, called Neuville,<sup>3</sup> with “no talent” but wearing a costume “ravishingly,” and possessed of plenty of self-conceit, good legs, and imperturbable coolness. These good qualities turned La Montansier's head, and Neuville deigned to let himself be loved—expecting to lose nothing by it. He nursed an ambition to play the principal parts at the Comédie Française; and Montansier had so many friends that he thought it was not impossible he should

<sup>1</sup> Arsenal Library. Bastille papers. Meunier's reports.

<sup>2</sup> Mairie of Bayonne. Extract from the register of births for the year 1730.

“The nineteenth December has been baptised by me, the undersigned, Marguerite Brunet, born the previous day, legitimate daughter of Jacques Brunet, pin-maker, and Marie Capdeinelle his wife, living at Maison d'Angla, Rue Faure: godfather Jean Rabaou (*sic*) turner, living at Moracin's house, Rue Orbe, godmother Marguerite D'Apezteguay de Laborde, Rue Luc, who has not signed here, not being able to write, as have done the father and godfather with me. Signed: Brunet, father, Jean Rabeau (*sic*), and Saint Martin, vicar.”

<sup>3</sup> He was born at Doué-la-Fontaine, May 31st, 1736.

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be able to overcome all obstacles thanks to the lady's influence. In this, however, he was deceived, Fortune reserving other triumphs for him.

If we dip at hazard into the Parisian pandemonium of the end of the eighteenth century, we are sure to draw out astonishingly original figures. The people in those days belonged to a generation of dare-devils, born to figure in epics and fairy tales, whilst in our days we only act in dismal farces—a fact which ought to be reassuring to those nervous spirits who are haunted with a dread of social cataclysms. For great dramas, great actors are needed, and never again can France bring together such a company as that which walked the boards on the eve of the Revolution. Even this Montansier, a mere supernumerary, is grand in her way. We see her starting off with her fresh complexion, her bright eyes with thick, black lashes, her tip-tilted nose, her roguish smile, and her Basque accent, to fight the battles of her well-beloved Neuville. She obtained for him from the Duc d'Harcourt, Governor of Normandy, the management of all the theatres in the three districts of Rouen, Alençon, and Caen,<sup>1</sup> and she exerted herself so much that she was granted the favour of opening a theatre at Versailles in the Rue de Satory. She scraped acquaintance with the Campans; visited Mlle. Bertin, the famous milliner; and flattered Léonard, the celebrated hairdresser. She was spoken of to Marie Antoinette, who expressed a wish to see her, and she slipped one night into a wire-grated box in the little theatre in the Rue de Satory. They were playing *Les Moissonneurs*, and the actors on the stage were eating a cabbage-soup which had such a fresh, rustic odour, that the young Queen, who delighted in peasant life, could not refrain from a melancholy "Oh, how nice it smells!" The remark was heard in the wings, and the manageress, who was keenly watching Her Majesty, intimated that "a share had been specially reserved for the Queen." That night La Montansier took soup with the daughter of Maria Theresa—an honour to which the highest nobles in France dared not aspire. By this means she

<sup>1</sup> *Le comédien Neuville et la Montansier*, by C. Hippeau.

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obtained the exclusive privilege of managing all the theatrical entertainments, balls, and *fêtes* of Versailles. She took advantage of this to construct at the end of the royal château opposite the prettiest part of the park, the grand theatre which still exists, and where her fortune began.

Meanwhile she managed her companies in Normandy, for Neuville was deficient in those administrative qualities necessary for such an important undertaking. He also was epic in his way. You can scarcely open the scandalous chronicles or the collections of *Nouvelles à la main* of those times without coming across some escapade of this turbulent impresario. Jealous "as a tiger"—not without reason, perhaps—he was incessantly on the road between Rouen and Versailles to look after the conduct of his mistress. But some love adventure would detain him on the road—for he did not pique himself on his fidelity—and Montansier, getting suspicious, would dash off post haste from Versailles to Rouen to find her inconstant lover and bring him back to the paths of virtue. There were scandalous squabbles in inns, stormy separations followed by noisy reconciliations, sword-thrusts, imprisonments in For-l'Évêque, abductions of actresses, and exciting pursuits—such was this actor's normal existence.<sup>1</sup>

A secret correspondence of the time notes that his adven-

<sup>1</sup> "*Versailles, December 16th, 1781. Sieur de Neuville, manager of the Rouen Theatre, known throughout Europe for his theatrical excursions and his adventures, has given a fresh instance of his blustering manners. He usually makes two journeys a month from Rouen here. He lodges with La Montansier, his old flame, manageress of our theatre, and specially protected by the Queen. Our rake brought in, one night, a young woman belonging to our company. Montansier suspected something, or was informed of this infidelity. It is said that her jealousy is always on the alert. She knocked at the door of the perjured Neuville, but he did not reply. She threatened to break open the door if he did not open it. Tired of the disturbance, he got up furious, took his sword, opened the door, and thrust the weapon into Montansier's arm. Her cries and the uproar brought a lot of people. They seized the inhuman actor who had tried to kill his benefactress, to whom he owes the existence he enjoys. He is in prison, and the case is being pressed on vigorously. Poor Montansier has allowed herself—in spite of the double crime of the inconstant one—to be softened by her old liking for him, and has petitioned the Queen to interest herself in favour of the culprit. That Princess replied that she did not protect assassins. What makes it all the worse for Sieur Neuville is that he has already a good number of bad offences to his account, and this may chance to be the last of this devourer of silly, old women.*"—*Correspondance secrète inédite sur Louis XVI et Marie Antoinette*, published by M. de Lescure.

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tures "have made this devourer of silly, old women celebrated throughout all Europe," and the archives at the Château d'Harcourt contain many valuable documents relating to his remarkable comic romances. We quote one amongst a hundred others.

On March 15th, 1782, at Rouen, Halot, the barber's assistant who shaved Neuville every day, knocked at his customer's door at the usual hour. He had not entered the house more than five minutes, when the neighbours heard a great noise, and the sound of a scuffle in the actor's lodging. They did not at first take much notice of it, being pretty well used to hear such sounds; but when they saw Neuville rush out, wearing a white *peignoir*, and his face covered with soap and crying "Assassin!" a crowd began to assemble. From the house came other cries of "Murder!" and when they entered they found Halot on the staircase, half dead, and covered with blood. This did not prevent Neuville from swearing on his honour, and that of his partner, that the barber had tried to murder him. It will never be known which had endeavoured to kill the other, though poor Halot, who had to be taken to the hospital, had all the appearance of a victim, and Neuville judged it advisable to disappear for a while. The affair, however, would have been regarded as a commonplace incident if all the "whitings" of Rouen had not taken the part of their *confrère*. It may be as well to mention that the hair-dressers of that period, whose clothes were always covered with powder, suggested the idea of a fish rolled in flour ready to be fried—hence the name of whitings (*merlans*). The "whitings" rose, marched to the Palais de Justice, two or three hundred strong, crying for vengeance, and demanding the comedian's head. The lawyers did not feel comfortable. Every day, as Commissary Renard remarked, "the lives of the magistrates were trusted to the razors of these gentlemen," and a general throat-cutting was feared. Many of the judges trembled when the razors of these indignant barbers were scraping their chins, and some scrupulously tidy councillors sat in court with beards of a week's growth. Never was a case judged more rapidly, and the verdict, as may be guessed, gave full satisfaction to the barbers. Gendarmes

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were instructed to run down Neuville, and capture him dead or alive, in any part of the kingdom.

Montansier, with the sword wound which her brutal lover had given her three months before hardly healed, was good-hearted enough to solicit the Queen's clemency once more, and the warrant was never served. But Neuville did not reappear at Rouen until two years later, and then he could not stay there in spite of all the influence of his mistress, whose grasping ambition had increased with age. She even had the idea of obtaining the management of all the theatres in the kingdom, in return for which she proposed to support the opera, which was not then in a flourishing condition, by an annual grant of 150,000 livres.

No doubt she would have succeeded in carrying out her grandiose scheme, had the Revolution not put an end to her plans. After October 1789 the King left Versailles, regardless of the supplications of Montansier, who sent her actors—she had impudence enough for anything—to try and stop the royal carriages. The Assembly declared itself “inseparable from the royal person,” and transferred its settings to Paris. That was the ruin of Versailles, and Montansier, seeing that the best days of her theatre were over, declared herself in turn “inseparable from the Assembly.” She was then nearly sixty years of age, but fate had in store for her still many years of life, and adventures which made the romance of her youth seem dull in comparison.

There was, at the end of the Palais Royal, a puppet-show, managed by Gardeur-Lebrun, and which was called after the neighbouring street, the “Beaujolais.” The stage was small, the front of the house narrow, and the ceiling low. Montansier bought this shed for 570,000 livres, and the architect Louis transformed it by a miracle into a comfortable and almost vast theatre, which was opened on April 12th 1790.<sup>1</sup>

Great was the success of Montansier's comedians. All Paris lived at the Palais Royal, for everyone was interested or amused by this strange manageress, who seemed to have such

<sup>1</sup> See the *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et des curieux*, July 25th, 1866.

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a rare instinct for knowing what would amuse. She exerted herself in a thousand ways; she lodged, with Neuville, in an apartment close to the theatre, the windows of which opened on to the garden, which was ever full of a crowd feverishly excited by pleasure or politics. Here she opened her "salons," where her visitors gambled, plotted, or wove intrigues. In this fantastic pellmell of all sorts and conditions of men might be met Dugazon and Barras, Père Duchêne and the Duc de Lauzun, Robespierre and Mlle. Maillard, Saint Georges and Danton, Volange and the Duc d'Orléans. "At one end of the old, faded, and torn sofa the mistress of the house arranged the bill for the week with Verteuil, her stage-manager; at the other end Grammont, the actor, arranged with Hébert the riots to take place next day at the Cordeliers."

These were Montansier's best days. Finding the little Beaujolais Theatre too small for her, she built—on the site of the old Louvois Hôtel, in the Rue de Richelieu—the largest and finest theatre in Paris. The ground alone cost 460,700 livres.<sup>1</sup> Enormous sums passed through her hands; she was a kind of queen of the Palais Royal, and though Paris was in a state of discord, she was clever enough to please all parties. At a time when most people were surly, pedantic, or pretentious, she was hearty, good-natured, vivacious, and not prudish, and she possessed, moreover, that inestimable and very French gift of a ready wit. Heaven knows she needed it to be able to keep her balance on the tight-rope of popularity, and had plenty of vexations, despite all her skill.

The tenth of August was a terrible blow to the theatres, though they managed to keep open, but on Sunday, September 2nd, they had to close their doors. The massacre of the prisoners at the Abbaye began at three o'clock that afternoon. The next day Paris was in a state of stupor, and people were being killed all over the city. As no money had been taken at the theatre for several nights, Montansier felt she must, at all hazards, hit on a new plan. She assembled all her company—actors, dancers, musicians, scene-painters,

<sup>1</sup> The contract was signed December 7th, 1791, at the office of MM. Rouen and Robin, notaries at Paris.

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carpenters, and machinists—put Neuville at their head, and sent them to the Assembly, which had been sitting *en permanence* ever since the morning. The affrighted inhabitants saw this company pass waving their be-ribboned hats, singing patriotic songs, and their jaunty swagger brought a little comfort to the terrified and silent city. At the Riding School—after a little parley with the ushers—the bar was opened, and Neuville, in a most dignified manner, read a little speech, in which he announced to the representatives of the nation that all the employees of Demoiselle Montansier, to the number of eighty-five, of whom fifteen only were armed, solicited “the honour of forming amongst them a company desirous to join the volunteers of the Moulins section to march against the enemies who threatened the country and liberty.” *Hérault de Séchelles, who presided, replied to the orator*; and the Assembly voted, amidst cheers, “an honourable mention,” and admitted the troupe to the “honours of the sitting.” On September 14th, after a fresh procession before the representatives, the battalion of the Butte des Moulins started for Châlons, and, as they passed through the crowded streets, Montansier’s company was not, it may easily be imagined, the least applauded. What an advertisement for the manageress! The Parisians recognised their favourite actors, all looking very nice in their military uniforms—Volange, Clauzel, Gavaudan, Dufresse, Seveste, the dancer, Gilbert, the conductor of the orchestra, and Delzenne, the first violin. At the head of this sacred battalion Captain Neuville rode, drawn up to his full height. He was fully persuaded that he had but to show himself and the whole Prussian army would take to its heels. But the god of battles ordained otherwise. Neuville, wishing to show himself in all his glory to the inhabitants of Rheims, wanted to hold a review; but, unfortunately, at the first movement of his war-charger, he tumbled off so clumsily that he dislocated his arm. He was picked up groaning, and Clauzel replaced him as commander of the company.

Eminently picturesque but very fanciful accounts have been given of this excursion of Montansier’s company with Dumouriez’ army—this band of actors flying to the rescue of



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the country in danger, and erecting a stage in the midst of the camp, and playing a farce between two battles. The subject was too tempting to escape amplification by the chroniclers. On reference to the few existing authentic documents,<sup>1</sup> the affair is diminished to small proportions; but still very honourable to the comedians, inasmuch as we never hear of them, and no doubt they did their duty like their comrades. We know only that, at Jemmapes, Dufresse was appointed staff-officer to General Moreton-Chabillant, and that the actors, as they had vowed, did not leave the army till the enemy had been driven beyond the frontiers.

On learning of Dumouriez' entry into Brussels, Montansier rushed off to join her company, followed by a train of waggons laden with costumes and properties. The eighth of January, 1793, she began in Belgium what she called "her propaganda," for she had managed to persuade the Government committees that the performance of *Le Tableau parlant* and *Le Désespoir de Jocrisse* would electrify the Flemish population, "fanaticised by ten centuries of slavery."<sup>2</sup> This little joke of hers cost the Republic 100,000 francs, and the bill would have been even heavier if the "propaganda" had not been suddenly interrupted; for the Austrians assumed the offensive and began a second invasion, which compelled her to return hastily to the Palais Royal.

But it would be fatiguing to follow this extraordinary woman through the inextricable maze of all her schemes. It makes one feverish even to turn over the papers. In the midst of the Reign of Terror, she was preparing to open her grand theatre in the Rue Richelieu—never had her activity been greater; the scenery was painted, the bills printed, the opening announced, when the Commune of Paris, finding it a splendid spot in which to install the Opéra, and ready prepared, confiscated the theatre, and, to prevent any recriminations on the part of the proprietor,

<sup>1</sup> See the *Revue d'art dramatique*, January 1892, June 1893, and Faber's *Le théâtre français en Belgique*.

<sup>2</sup> La Montansier kept open her theatre at Brussels from January 8th, 1793, to Easter, inclusively, "regarding it as very important to play during Holy Week, and strike the first blow at the religious abuses with which the country is infected."

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issued a warrant for her arrest. They put her in prison, but they knew very little of her if they imagined she would stay there. She poured forth supplications, memorials, statements, and cries of rage.<sup>1</sup> She so stirred up the people of Paris that the authorities were afraid to send her to the guillotine. By the 9th of Thermidor she was at liberty, and excited merriment by bringing an action against the Convention, and claiming seven million francs compensation. "Seven millions!" cried Bourdon; "for that sum we could buy a squadron of war vessels!"

It is asserted that she received eight millions—but it was in *assignats*, and this mock settlement only further increased her wrath. To the end of her life she declared she had been robbed, and from that day forth believed she possessed all the millions she claimed.

She might have been worth much more, for she came very near being Empress, and we almost regret that her good fairy did not bestow that title on her—it would have been the finest comedy in history and have astonished future ages.

On leaving prison she resumed possession of her apartment in the Palais Royal, and gave up a part of it to Barras, who had become, since the 9th of Thermidor, the lion of Paris, and whose "friend" she had been "from time immemorial." Barras had many "friends" of that kind, and it casts an instructive light on the manners of the Revolution, when we find the most influential man in the Government living in the house of an actress.

Montansier was then sixty-five years old, but she carried her age "with all the advantages that a certain plumpness, gaiety, and obliging manners could give." Barras often received visits from a young officer whom we are ever meeting, hungry and awkward, in the histories of that date—Bonaparte. He came to ask benefits of his protector;

<sup>1</sup> *Justification of Citoyenne Montansier.* "I am accused of having been acquainted with Widow Capet, of having followed Dumouriez to Belgium, of having depreciated the *assignats* in Belgium, of having built a theatre in the Rue de la Loi with the money of the English and Widow Capet, of having wished to burn down the National Library, etc." Montansier was imprisoned at Petite Force. On the 13th of Messidor, Year II., she was transferred to the Plessis prison.—*Archives of the Prefecture of Police.*

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sometimes a post, sometimes cloth for a new suit, sometimes a dinner—and Barras treated him as a young man of no consequence, although he recognised “his capabilities.” La Montansier, who often dropped in without any ceremony, “in the *déshabille* of a neighbour,” to see her lodger, took a liking to the young soldier, which made Barras think it would be a stroke of luck for Bonaparte to marry the sexagenarian actress, who had a million francs, without counting the money due to her. The question of money alone seemed to interest the young man, and when his mind was set at ease on that score, he consented to see the lady again and “come to terms.”

A long time afterwards—when Barras was ill-tempered and envious—he delighted in giving an account of this engagement, noting with minute care all the incidents which were of a nature to make the person he hated with all the ardour of disappointed ambition look hateful or ridiculous. “I betrothed the future spouses that very day and they both agreed with equal willingness. I thought I should burst out laughing, but I had to keep serious. At table, I placed Mlle. Montansier by my side, and told Bonaparte to sit opposite us. All dinner-time, both kept their eyes fixed on the other. . . . We rose from table; they began to talk together privately. I moved away, so as not to disturb this interesting conversation, but I could not help catching a few words. They talked as though they had been old friends—‘we will do this, we will do that’—*we* every instant. Bonaparte spoke of his family, to whom he hoped to introduce Mlle. Montansier. His mother and all his brothers would esteem a lady so *distinguée*; and he wished to take her to Corsica as soon as possible.” In short, the business was nearly settled; when the 13th of Vendémiaire came, the future Cæsar, foreseeing the future, hastened to break off the engagement.

To say the truth, this matrimonial project seems to have existed more especially—and retrospectively—in the imagination of Barras. It gave him such importance, and he brings into his story so much clumsy cautiousness, and carefully prepared proofs, as to make us suspect its veracity.

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It is true that long before the publication of the *Memoirs* of the Director, and even in the days of the Empire, a report was current in Paris that a marriage between Napoleon and Mlle. Montansier had been arranged and then broken off. But Barras was just the sort of man to set that lie afloat.<sup>1</sup>

There is one thing that Montansier has in common with Napoleon, and that is that it is impossible for a chronicler to relate her history in a few lines. The *dossier* I am now turning over has hardly been touched, and that explains why biographers have never given but deplorably short or absurd notices of the life of this female Proteus. An octavo volume would be needed—but who would read a volume about Montansier?

We have traced her career up to the age of sixty-five; and she lived to be nearly a hundred. She went to law; she built a new theatre—the *Variétés*; her name was inscribed in the Public Ledger for an income of 5062 livres; she manœuvred with all the skill of a juggler amongst her creditors, her actors, her debtors, and all who interfered with her success, or were obstacles to her fame; and she married Neuville on September 6th, 1800. She was in dire poverty for six months, then again became a millionaire for three years. By a decree of the Emperor, dated from Moscow, she received 300,000 francs, but in a short time there was nothing left. Yet six months later she was re-installed in her apartment in the Palais Royal, which had been newly fitted up and furnished with fresh silk hangings.

There was, in 1860, at the Rouen Theatre, an old actor, M. Prud'hon, who remembered having been introduced to Mme. Montansier-Neuville, fifty years ago, at Brunet's house. He recollected her as "rather tall, and having preserved, in spite of her great age, all her faculties, and the remains of her beauty. She had been a brunette, with a face that was still provoking, a turn-up nose, and very

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs* of Barras, vol. i., p. 242. See also, in the same volume, Appendix VIII., *The projected marriage of Bonaparte and Mlle. Montansier*. This gossip evidently pleased Barras, and occupies in his *Memoirs* as much space as the story of the revolution of the 9th of Thermidor.

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quick eyes with long black eyelashes. She was most unceremonious in her speech, and was full of high spirits even at eighty years of age."

The portrait is just like her. At that time she was in love with a rope-dancer, named Forioso, and that was her last love affair, or, at least, the last that we know of after 1815. She could often be met crossing the Palais Royal, at noon. She came on from Ternes, where she had a country house, and trotted along, wearing a canary-coloured dress, with high laced shoes, a very "loud" cashmereshawl like a scarf across her shoulders, and, on her head, a kind of turban of the fashion of 1790.<sup>1</sup> She died—very piously at her house at Ternes—on July 13th, 1820. After a long interview with the priest, she called Mlle. Lillié, an old theatrical friend, and made known her last wishes.

She bequeathed all her creditors to the King of France.<sup>2</sup>

## II

### MADAME FOUQUIER-TINVILLE

NOTHING could be more quietly *bourgeois* than the story of the first marriage of Fouquier-Tinville in October, 1775.

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of Paul de Kock.

<sup>2</sup> The *Journal des Théâtres*, of July 16th, 1820, published the following obituary notice: "Marguerite Brunet Montansier, widow of Honoré-Bourdon Neuville, died the 13th of this month at the age of ninety. She died proprietor of a fifth part of the Variétés Theatre, Boulevard Montmartre, constructed by her and her former actors, who became her partners. In payment of the opera house in the Rue de Richelieu she received, by the law of the 24th of Frimaire, Year VI., 8 millions, partly in *assignats* of the Year III., and the remainder in an annuity of 5062 livres on the Public Ledger, which she was obliged to make over to her creditors. As a compensation for the glass broken at the Palais Royal Theatre, and the doors which she had constructed at the Grand Opera, and which were not included in the payment, she had asked the King to grant her a benefit at the Opéra once a year. She was then more than eighty-eight years of age. Comte de Pradel put off his decision as to this demand, and it is asserted that her illness was solely owing to this refusal on the part of the Minister. Having accomplished all her religious duties, she said only a few words. "I leave," she said, "numerous creditors. I desire that the King should be made aware of the state of my affairs, and H.M. will no doubt grant to my creditors what I should ask on their behalf and my own."—*Arsenal Library*.



*J. G. Fouquier-Tinville  
Pendant son procès au tribunal Révolutionnaire*

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE

A sketch from life made at the Revolutionary Tribunal

(In the possession of M. HENRI LAVEDAN)



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He was twenty-nine years of age, and had just been permitted to purchase the law-office of Maître Cornillier, *procureur* at the Châtelet, in the Rue du Foin-Saint-Jacques, for which he had paid 32,400 livres. His mother, Marie Louise Martine, widow (for the last sixteen years) of a farmer—Messire Eloy Fouquier de Tinville, proprietor of the estate of Hérouël, in the environs of Ham—had advanced him 15,000 livres. He, on his side, had borrowed, on condition of paying an annuity of 200 livres to a certain Abbé Collier de la Marlière, a sum of 12,000 livres, of which he employed 7,400 in paying for his practice, and 4,600 in furnishing his rooms comfortably.<sup>1</sup>

Abbé Louis Nicolas Antoine Saugnier, bachelor of theology, chaplain of the churches of Noyon and Péronne, and son of a sister of Mme. Fouquier de Tinville, helped his cousin to borrow the money from the Abbé de la Marlière, and when he saw him settled, and provided with a good practice, added to his other good services by marrying him to his sister, Geneviève-Dorothée, one of the nine children of Quentin Saugnier, formerly goldsmith at Péronne. Fouquier-Tinville therefore married his first cousin; the Pope was solicited for a dispensation, which the Abbé de la Marlière easily obtained; and the contract was signed on May 3rd, 1775, in the office of Me. Giroust, notary, Rue Tiquetonne. The relations of the future bride did not think it worth while to undertake a journey to Paris on the occasion; the girl lodged with a friend of the family, Mme. Fortin, a dressmaker in the Rue Montmartre. As to the religious marriage, that took place on October 19th, at Mont Saint-Martin in Picardy.

The Saugniers had no fortune of any kind, but an uncle of the young couple, Abbé Charles Martine de la Motte, canon of the cathedral of Noyon, advanced the father and mother of the future bride 4,000 livres of the legacy he was going to leave them for a wedding portion, and gave besides 2,000 ready money. Dorothée Saugnier therefore brought with her a sum of 6,000 livres on her marriage. Fouquier-Tinville had his practice as procurator, upon which he owed 10,000

<sup>1</sup> Archives of Me. Breuillaud, notary at Paris.



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livres, and of which the annual revenue was estimated at 6,000 livres.

The household installed itself on the first floor of a house belonging to Sieur Godin, *bourgeois* of Paris, Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve, near the corner of the Rue Saint-Philippe ; and the rent was "1,200 livres, plus 60 livres for the porter." The office was furnished with a walnut-wood desk, tables, benches, stools, deal shelves, and an earthenware stove, and looked on to the court. Fouquier's private office came next, lighted from the street ; it contained a large desk, cane chairs and arm-chairs, a *secrétaire* and bookcase in rosewood, a gilt console table with marble top surmounted by a looking-glass framed in carved wood. This old furniture seems to have a style about it, even in the dry nomenclature of an inventory. The drawing-room had two windows looking on to the street and between them was a long glass ; and it contained two card-tables, a backgammon table, an ottoman, a sofa, and ten arm-chairs covered in crimson Utrecht velvet. On the marble top of a chiffonnier was placed, under a glass shade, the wedding-bouquet of Dorothée Saugnier. The dining-room looked on to the courtyard, as also did the bedroom, which contained, amongst other furniture, "a large chest of drawers in rosewood, with two large and two small drawers," an easy chair and two arm-chairs covered in yellow Utrecht velvet, and two beds on low pillars. The cook, Françoise Darnois, slept in a room with an alcove, looking on to the courtyard, and the manservant, Eloy Chambertin, called "la Jeunesse," in a room on the ground floor, close to the stable and the kitchen, with an entrance under the gateway of the house.<sup>1</sup>

The family quickly increased : a son—Pierre Quentin—was born on July 17th, 1776. A daughter—Geneviève Louis-Sophie—was born on January 3rd, 1778, followed in the same year by another—Emilie Françoise, born on December 7th. A year later, to the day, came a fourth child—again a daughter—who was baptised Marie Adélaïde. The practice also prospered. In 1777 the Fouquiers hired, for 400 livres a year, part of a house at Ecouen, to pass their Sundays in the

<sup>1</sup> Inventory taken after the death of Dame Geneviève Dorothée Saugnier.—*Archives of Me. Breuillaud.*

summer. They left in the morning, and generally the Depille family went with them. Depille—a grocer in the Faubourg Saint-Martin—had married Adélaïde Isabelle Saugnier, eldest daughter of Mme. Fouquier. From Ecouen they made excursions into the neighbouring villages, and thus it was that Fouquier made the acquaintance of a Sieur Hémart, at Villiers-le-Bel, to whom in June 1781 he confided his little boy. The board at Hémart's cost 75 livres per quarter.

The fact of sending a boy of five to boarding-school is the more surprising, as two months later Fouquier gave up his residence at Ecouen, and left the district, renting a comfortable house with a garden, at Charonne, for 600 livres a year. Hitherto his life had been as hum-drum as anybody's, but about this time there came a crisis in his affairs, some of the incidents of which are still obscure.

On January 20th, 1782, Mme. Fouquier gave birth to a fifth child, who was baptised Aglaé Joséphine.<sup>1</sup>

This was the poor mother's last happiness. Soon afterwards we find Fouquier bothered with money troubles. On April 1st, just at the beginning of the pleasantest time of the year, he sub-let his house at Charonne to an officer in the French Guards; and the same day he asked his brother, Eloy Fouquier d'Hérouël, for the balance of his father's inheritance, 3,257 livres, for which he gave a receipt on April 10th. On the 23rd of the same month Mme. Fouquier died in the Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve: her funeral took place two days later at the church of Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle. The funeral expenses amounted to the sum of "674 livres 12 sols," including the service and the procession, intimations of death, hangings, mourning cloaks, crapes and gloves.<sup>2</sup> Two months later little Joséphine also died at Bellenglise, near Saint-

<sup>1</sup> "The year 1782, January 20th, was baptised Aglaé Joséphine, born yesterday, daughter of Maitre Antoine Quentin Fouquier de Tinville, procurator at the Châtelet, and of Geneviève Dorothée Saugnier, his wife, Rue Bourbon, in this parish of Bonne Nouvelle."—*Bibliothèque Nationale, newly acquired Fr. MSS., No. 3617.*

<sup>2</sup> Receipt, dated April 25th. 1782, from the Abbé Sutet, vicar of Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle, for funeral expenses of Mme. Fouquier de Tinville.—*Papers of M<sup>c</sup>. Breuillaud, notary.*

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Quentin, at the house of the woman, Mme. Lenicque, with whom she had been put to nurse.<sup>1</sup>

So far as we can read this history, of which, after a hundred and twenty-five years, we can only catch glimpses in notarial deeds—divisions of property and inventories—which do not tell much, and are as dry and exact as a protocol, there would seem to have been a certain connection between this need of money and the death which followed it. The Depilles accused Fouquier of having by his bad conduct and debauchery caused the death of his wife. Fouquier, on the contrary, declared that the Depilles had killed their sister “by meddling and worry.” One point appears evident from both allegations, and that is that poor Dorothée Saugnier must have been far from happy.

Fouquier remained a widower a very short time. Four months after the death of his wife, he asked for the hand of “a very young person,” Henriette Jeanne Gérard d’Aucourt, a minor, daughter of Dame Madeleine d’Arnaud, who had become the widow, three years before, of a Sieur Etienne Gérard, who died whilst on a journey, at Lille in 1779. The contract was signed before Me. Rameau, notary at Paris. The wedding portion of the future bride consisted of a sum of 10,000 livres paid by the mother in cash, in addition to apparel, linen, and effects valued at 1,200 livres. Fouquier brought his practice—still not completely paid for—and settled on his wife a sum of 800 livres a year. In the contract Fouquier does not state the number of his children—the space for the figure is left blank. Had he forgotten, or did he hesitate to avow to his very young wife that on her wedding-day she would find herself the step-mother of three little girls, and a boy six and a half years old?

There is some mystery about this marriage, which appears to have been settled and concluded in great haste. This young man, who had been hitherto so tractable and easily led by his protector the canon, his uncle the chaplain, his cousin

<sup>1</sup> “Interments at the parish church of Saint Médard of Bellenglise, district of Saint-Quentin, diocese of Noyon, 1782, June 22nd. Aglaé Joséphine, daughter of Fouquier de Tinville, and the defunct Dorothée Saugnier, his wife, nursed by Geneviève Brunelet, wife of Louis Lenicque, day-labourer of this parish, died yesterday at the age of five months.”

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the abbé, and his numerous brothers- and sisters-in-law, escaped from them suddenly, and took a wife from amongst quite different surroundings. The Gérard d'Aucourts were from Limoges. Since the death of the head of the family, the mother and daughter had settled at Paris, in the Rue des Postes, with an aunt, the widow of a Comte de Chaillou, formerly Governor of Martinique. It was from the house of this relative that the marriage took place. The only member of the Fouquier family present was his brother, De Forest, then an advocate at the parliament. It is very probable that from that day forward the newly married couple took no further trouble about the children, except the son, whose board they continued to pay. The three girls were received by their relatives at Saint-Quentin. One of them—Adélaïde—died there in 1786, and her father does not appear to have been greatly affected; only two of her uncles, Fouquier of Hérouël and Fouquier of Vauvillers were present at the funeral.

The reason has never been discovered why, less than a year after his marriage with Mlle. Gérard d'Aucourt, Fouquier sold his practice. It was lucrative and Fouquier boasted of having considerably improved it; moreover, it represented the whole of his fortune. Was he, as has been said, obliged to resign his office or be driven ignominiously out of it? That has never been proved, but it is true that from that day he led a kind of wandering life. He left the Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve, and opened a lawyer's office. We find him in 1784 in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; in 1787, Rue Vielle du Temple; in 1788, Rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie; in 1791, Rue de Chartres; in 1792, Rue Saint-Honoré "opposite the Assumption" in a house close to that of the carpenter Duplay, Robespierre's host. These constant movings do not indicate a very prosperous business—in fact Fouquier made no secret of the matter. In 1792 he was without resources—he had spent not only the money he had received for his practice, but the ten thousand francs which constituted his wife's marriage portion as well.

What had he done in the last nine years? The question has been often asked, but Desessarts, the publisher of

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"Famous Trials" is the only person who has ever answered it. "He was," he says, "a disgraced procurator, and a past master at conducting a case, however unjust it might be, through all the mazes of chicanery. His life was divided between this shameful, but lucrative, charlatanism, and the filthy pleasures of licentiousness. In the morning he would be found surrounded by the dupes he misled, or the rascals whose dirty schemes he assisted; and in the evening he spent on courtesans the fruits of his trickery. He had a special liking for ballet-girls, and spent the whole of his fortune upon them." And thus it came to pass that on August 20th, 1792, reduced to the lowest expedients, seeing the old world crumbling away, and his compatriot Camille Desmoulins pushed into the position of Secretary General to the Minister of Justice, Fouquier Tinville made known "his capabilities for law affairs," and solicited a post "in the offices or elsewhere."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He had previously applied for a post, as is shown by the request dated April 1791, the original of which is now before me. This letter remained amongst the papers of Liger de Verdigny, President of the Court which tried Fouquier in 1795, and was forwarded to me by M. A. Foulquier, whom I hereby thank.

*To the Members of the Court of Appeal.*—Called by the votes of your fellow-citizens to fulfil the functions of the first tribunal of the nation, permit Sieur Fouquier de Tinville to join to the feeling of veneration, which the dignity of your character inspires, the homage of the most sincere felicitations.

Informed of the great number of candidates who present themselves to obtain the post of chief registrar of the Court of Appeal, Sieur Fouquier thought it his duty to refrain from any wish for this post, but jealous of the happiness of possessing one in your Court, he solicits the kindness of your votes for one of the two places of Secretary-Registrar in your Court.

As it is necessary for the candidate to enlighten your justice, Gentlemen, and give proofs of his zeal for public business and his capabilities for the post for which he solicits your kind consideration, he has the honour to remark that he has exercised for ten years the position of Procurator to the Châtelet of Paris with the honour and probity which characterise an honest man, and that he only sold it on account of ill-health, from which he has since recovered. Sieur Fouquier, the father of seven children all living, of whom the eldest is not yet fifteen, and with very little fortune, finds himself under the necessity of soliciting this post; the more so as having sold his practice a year before the Revolution, he cannot exercise the profession of solicitor at the district courts, according to a decision of the Committee of Constitution.

From the moment the Revolution began he has fulfilled all the obligations, and performed all the duties of every patriotic citizen; he mounted guard on July 13th, 1789, and since; he has been enrolled in the National Guard ever since its formation, and has been many times commissary of a

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Old and experienced judges and officials were quietly slipping away, with disturbing unanimity, and men were wanted who could be "kept well in hand." Five days after sending his petition, Fouquier was named one of the directors of the "jury of accusation" at the "Extraordinary Criminal Tribunal" which led to his being made, in March 1793, when the Revolutionary Tribunal was created, Public Accuser.

section from the commencement of the Revolution and since; a patriot, and brother of M. Fouquier d'Hérouël, deputy, in the National Assembly, for Saint-Quentin, known as an excellent patriot, and occupied with business affairs in the capital for nearly twenty-five years, he can have no doubt that he possesses the aptitude necessary for the place he solicits. He offers, moreover, to give any information which may be required as to his habits, honesty, capability, and patriotism.

Sieur Fouquier dares, consequently, to hope that the Gentlemen of the Court of Appeal will take his request into consideration, and asks them to give him their votes for the post of Secretary-Registrar, which he asks of their kindness.

*Signed: FOUQUIER DE TINVILLE.*

It is with the greatest interest that I recommend to the members of the Court of Appeal, M. Fouquier; his special knowledge, twenty-five years' work, his honesty, prompt me to wish to see him in the public employment, and to solicit for him the post he desires.

*Signed: PARDIEU.*

I fully share all the feelings and interest of my colleague, M. de Pardieu, for M. Fouquier, my fellow-citizen, who is to be recommended in every respect.

*Signed: DU PLAQUET.*

I can attest that M. Fouquier is fitted for the post he desires by his capabilities, intelligence, honesty, experience, regularity of conduct, as well as by the sympathy his numerous family must inspire.

*Signed: BROCHETON.*

I certify to the Messieurs of the Court of Appeal that the intelligence, knowledge, and experience of my brother in business qualify him to occupy with zeal and discretion the post he asks of their favour, and his numerous family imposes on me the duty of begging those Gentlemen to favour him by bestowing this post upon him.

*Signed: E. FOUQUIER, deputy for Saint-Quentin.*

We, deputies of the National Assembly, after the testimony which has been given us by MM. Depardieu, Brocheton, and Fouquier d'Hérouël his brother, and others of our colleagues as to the probity, capability, and patriotism of M. Fouquier de Tinville, owe him the justice to solicit Messieurs of the Court of Appeal to favourably consider his request, and we trust that they will, by their votes, bestow upon him the post at Paris he desires.

This fourteenth April, 1791.

*Signed: C. S. LEROUX, deputy in the National Assembly for Amiens,*

DAUCHY, deputy,

LENGLIER, deputy for the Oise Department,

PINCEPRÉ DEBUIRE, deputy for Péronne.

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The post was worth 8,000 livres a year, with the additional advantage of a residence in the Palais.

Fouquier-Tinville's apartment was situated in the building now occupied by the Governor of the Conciergerie; the windows opened on a little terrace overlooking the Quai de l'Horloge. As there was no entrance to the Palais, in those days, from the Quai, the rooms of the Public Accuser were reached by a dark, inclined passage leading from the Cour du Mai to the present courtyard. In this latter was the staircase which led to Fouquier-Tinville's rooms.

He had brought with him the greater part of the furniture which had formerly decorated his lodgings in the Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve, and which had accompanied him in all his peregrinations. The children by his first marriage did not live with him; his two daughters, Sophie and Emilie, remained in the Aisne, with their uncles; as to *Tinville*—as Fouquier called his son—he had enlisted July 28th, 1792, when he was sixteen years old, and no news of him had been heard in April 1793. Then at last the Public Accuser decided to write to the Minister of War to know if his son were dead or alive.<sup>1</sup> He learned that Pierre Quentin was serving in the 76th brigade of the line.

About the same time, and very soon after he had taken up his residence in the Palais, his wife presented him with twins—a boy and a girl—who were baptised Antoine Henri and Henriette. An old aunt of Mme. Fouquier-Tinville, Mme. Henriette Gérard d'Aucourt, was the godmother of both children; she lived with her niece in the Palais. The household lived very modestly, and kept only one servant-girl—Pélagie, who was devotedly attached to her master and mistress.

Mme. Fouquier was thirty years old in 1793; she was a simple, quiet, retiring woman, and,—if a portrait of her,

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Fouquier-Tinville to the Minister of War. "The only son I have, aged but sixteen years six months, left for the frontiers on July 28th last year, and has not since returned. I have had no news of my son for a long time past, and I should be glad if you will have the kindness to inform me where his battalion is, so that I can write to my son, for his silence makes me very anxious about him. April 16th, 1793."—*Catalogue of a collection of autograph letters and historical documents.* Wilkinson and Hodge, Wellington Street, Strand, London.

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painted about this time, is to be believed,—not pretty, but gentle and good ; her forehead was high, and she looked fairly intelligent. Some verses which she addressed to her husband on St. Anthony's day—his *fête*—have been preserved. She sung them to him, to the air of *Je suis Lindor* :

“ Flore en ce jour a couronné ta tête ;  
Ton cœur toujours est orné de vertus ;  
Antoine aurait un grand patron de plus  
Si la mérite étoit un nom de fête.”

From the month of June 1793 the work of accusation became “very absorbing” ; it was the beginning of the time when large batches of prisoners were daily sent to their doom, and Fouquier, as he became more earnest in his work, hardly appeared at home. He slept three or four hours, rarely more. For twenty hours, every day, he prepared the food for the guillotine ;—a colossal work which he would entrust to no one else. The enormous mass of the *dossiers* of the Tribunal is now in the National Archives ;—six hundred cardboard boxes stuffed with papers ;—inquiries, requisitions, depositions, papers seized, acts of accusation, reports, denunciations, examinations—all have passed through Fouquier's hands. On every sheet is found the sinister stroke of his red pencil, and in the margin of the text the terrible *hic* where he saw the opening for some conclusive question. This *hic* indicates the pit-fall or snare into which a poor wretch, struggling for his life, has fallen.

As a relief from this intense labour, Fouquier had audiences, some of which were very long and troublesome, and paid visits, almost every evening, to the Committees of General Surety and Public Safety,<sup>1</sup> to receive orders. He worked

<sup>1</sup> He also went to see Robespierre—whatever may be said to the contrary. Several witnesses, whose evidence it is scarcely possible to rebut, saw him at Duplay's house, where “the Incorruptible” lived—Charlotte Robespierre amongst the number. The following fact should also be noticed : Ouvrard, the future financier, who happened to be in Paris in 1794, was kind enough to ask Robespierre to remove from the Conciergerie to some less exposed prison the two hundred and thirty-two people of Nantes, his fellow-townsmen, who had been sent by Carrier to the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris. The page of his Memoirs in which he recounts his experiences must be quoted in full. “Learning of the deplorable condition of the Nantais, my first movement was to try and relieve them and restore them to liberty. I soon learned that the daughters of a carpenter, with whom Robespierre lodged in the Rue St. Honoré, had some influence with



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"like an ox in the furrow," toiling with all the might of a conscientious functionary who has been long out of employment, and is delighted to find himself in a good berth. Later, he understood that he personified dread, and was the incarnation of terror, and he closed his eyes that he might not recoil from his position. "When you have dipped a foot in crime," he said, "it is better to jump in altogether." Like Macbeth he knew that he was "in blood stepped in so far that should he wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er"—and he continued to advance. When he feared lest he should give way, he drank heavily: every day, at the bar, he swallowed large draughts of brandy with the jurors—the

him, and I did not hesitate to seek their protection. One day, having gone to the Convention, I saw that Robespierre occupied the tribune. I at once went to see these girls; I described to them the misfortunes of my compatriots with all the warmth of a young man. My prayers and entreaties were not without effect; the next day, the younger of the two sisters received me with a confident air which seemed to me to augur well. She had obtained for me an interview with Robespierre for the following day. I could not help feeling some emotion on appearing before the terrible dictator. I found him sitting along with these two young girls, taking luncheon and coffee. He received me well, asked me to take lunch, and told me he knew the cause of my visit, but that in such a business he could do nothing. "See Fouquier-Tinville or his registrar," he added, when I was about to leave him. I had the success of my endeavours too much at heart to neglect such a suggestion. I went to see the registrar, but found only his wife. She had neither the manners nor simplicity of the carpenter's daughters. . . . After many protestations of zeal, she finished by saying that any application to Fouquier-Tinville would be useless, "except that of some interesting lady-applicant."

This reply left me little hope; but Mlle. de M——, whose father (one of the prisoners) was suffering from gaol-fever, and might have been taken from her at any moment, determined to present herself to Fouquier to request that he might be moved to some private hospital. The beauty of this young lady, her tears, embarrassment, and candour, made an impression on Fouquier-Tinville. He listened to her with interest, and ended by giving her some hopes of a favourable decision if she would meet him alone, at two o'clock the next day, at the Tuileries, on the terrace by the side of the water. Fouquier did not make her wait; enveloped in a blue cloak and with his hat pulled down over his face, the little man appeared, at the time appointed, before the suppliant, and offered her his arm and his umbrella. He took her to La Rapée, where he did the honours of a modest dinner. During the meal, Fouquier-Tinville, governed by some feeling, which he did not like to let appear, more than by business affairs, spoke very little, and though he often looked intently at Mlle. de M——, not a word nor a gesture made that young lady regret the hazardous step she had taken. The dinner over, he conducted her back to the Tuileries, and took leave of her with all the awkwardness that might have been expected from such an admirer; but he was faithful to his promise, and the prisoner was removed."—*Mémoires de G. J. Ouvrard*, 1826, vol. i., pp. 10 *et seq.*

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“solid men,” those who had aided him best. When he had drunk, he relished his vocation, derided the condemned prisoners he was sending to Sanson, watched them mount the fatal tumbril, and then went back to resume his terrible work. He was drunk on the night when, returning from the Tuileries and crossing the Pont au Change, he seized his companion by the arm, and, pointing to the Seine, said, “Look how red it is.”<sup>1</sup>

A document preserved in a private collection states that he was arrested for drunkenness and disturbance in the streets, in company with his son, who had come to Paris for a few days, and was as drunk as his father.<sup>2</sup> When his reason returned, he was terrified at his work. “I would rather be a labourer,” he once said.<sup>3</sup> And, no doubt, that day he thought of the fifteen happy years he had spent on his father’s farm, which the inventory describes to us as being large and prolific, with a front on the village street, a pigeon house, windmill, outbuildings, stables filled with forty horses, and a sheepfold.<sup>4</sup> It must have vexed him to the heart to remember the free, independent, honest life his father had led and his brothers continued to lead. Strange as it is to reflect, too, that when he left the court, and whilst the tumbrils were being laden with those whom he had sent to their doom—mothers with their daughters, husbands with their wives, feeble old nuns, and children of seventeen—this man would return home, sit at table between his wife and her aunt, eat with a good appetite, and dandle his children on his knee.

On the 14th of Thermidor, whilst drinking a glass of

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Séran (Fouquier’s Trial). “On the road Fouquier and Héron talked about the victories gained by the guillotine. Fouquier replied, ‘I am satisfied with its success; but there are some people who, though renowned patriots, have suffered by it. Others will also, and I fear that it will do me an ill turn.’ He said that he had seen the ghosts of some patriots, and for some time past had believed he was haunted, and did not know how it would all end.”—*National Archives*, W. 500.

<sup>2</sup> Information furnished by M. A. Bégis.

<sup>3</sup> Statement made by Mme. Devillers, who kept the refreshment bar at the Tribunal.—*National Archives*, W. 500.

<sup>4</sup> Settlement of the estate of Sieur Eloy Fouquier de Tinville, October 8th, 1779. *Papers of Me. Breuillaud, notary*. According to this document, Fouquier-Tinville’s father was rich; his widow’s share alone of the estate amounting to 167,634 livres in landed property.

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spirits at the bar, Fouquier was informed by a little hunchback, who was one of the ushers of the court, that the Convention had issued a warrant for his arrest. He finished his brandy at a gulp, and went straight to the Tuileries, after having first informed his wife.<sup>1</sup> An hour later he returned to the Palais and voluntarily gave himself up as a prisoner at the Conciergerie. His entrance there occasioned a sort of riot; the gaoler had only just time to save him from the fury of the other inmates by locking him up in a dark cell, and, all night, the ex-Public Accuser, whom no one would have dared to so much as look at the day before, heard the prisoners beating at the door, and pouring forth sarcasms and insults. Perhaps never before that tragic hour had he understood what a fearful part he had played, and what an everlasting curse would rest upon his name. A perquisition was made at his apartment that night; "Citoyennes Fouquier, mother and daughter," were searched—it was Aunt Henriette whom the police took to be the mother—and all the papers were carried to the Committee of General Safety. Four days later the two women left the Palais, and went to reside, with the children, in the Rue de la Harpe; to that address were sent the letters from Fouquier to his wife during the examination which preceded his trial.

These letters, which he sent from the prison at Plessis, whither he had been transferred, are very valuable, and not less valuable are the memoranda for his reply to the accusation. He has an idea of the horror he inspired. "I do not know anyone who will undertake my defence," he writes; and, further on,—“I, who could not find in any country an inch of ground to put my head on.” His letters to his wife are dry, circumspect, prudent; he speaks of nothing but the defence he is preparing, and the food, which the devoted servant brought to the prison every day. "You know I am not particular about my food: I eat because I must. Send me some pepper and salt, and uncork the bottle, for I have neither knife, scissors, nor corkscrew. I should like a bottle

<sup>1</sup> *Le Tribunal revolutionnaire de Paris*, by M. Campardon, vol. i., pp. 434 *et seq.*

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of brandy, for nothing keeps me up but drinking a little." There is never any affection, save the laconic, "I kiss you, your aunt, and the children." Then, seeing that things "look bad," and fearing that he may be forbidden to write, he informs his wife that he can dissimulate no longer, and expects the end will come soon. The letter is pretty and touching:

"It is a settled thing that I have calculated on for a long time past, but which I kept silent about, to spare you the blow as long as possible. I shall die for having served my country with too much zeal and activity, and for having obeyed the wishes of the Government, with clean hands and heart. But what will become of you, *ma bonne amie*, and the children? You will suffer all the horrors of the most fearful poverty. This sorrowful idea overcomes me, and torments me day and night! I was born to misfortune. What a fearful thought. . . . I beg of you not to abandon yourself to grief, and to take care of your health for your own sake and for that of our poor children. Forget the little quarrels we may have had; they were caused by my hot temper, and my heart was not concerned in them, or has ever ceased to be attached to you. . . . It is hard, *ma bonne amie*, to talk about such sad ideas, but I have thought it well over, and considering that when once I am brought to trial, it will not be possible to send you another letter, I determined to send you the last expression of my feelings, and my thanks for all the trouble you have taken since I have been in prison. Do not, I repeat, give way to grief, and do not throw away any opportunity of improving your condition. With tears in my eyes and a sore heart, I say farewell for the last time to you, your aunt, and our poor children. I kiss you all; I kiss you a thousand times. Alas! what a sweet satisfaction I should feel to be able to see you again, and press you in my arms! But, *ma bonne amie*, that is done with, and we must think no more of it.

"Adieu, a thousand times adieu; and also to the few friends we have left, and more especially to the servant. Kiss the children and your aunt for me: act as a mother

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to my children, whom I exhort to be good and listen to you. Adieu, adieu; thy faithful husband to his last breath.”<sup>1</sup>

It was on the 17th of Floréal, Year III. (May 6th, 1795), at eleven o'clock in the morning, that the ex-Accuser and fifteen of the jurors, or *sheep*, who were most compromised in the proceedings of the Tribunal, were executed. Soon after dawn, joyous crowds from all the suburbs began to pour towards the Grève, and collect along the route the tumbrils would follow. From her lodgings in the Rue de la Harpe, Mme. Fouquier-Tinville might have heard the echo of their joy, and the hooting with which the multitude greeted the condemned. It is said that as the cart was making its way slowly through the crowd, a young and pretty woman clung to its side, and “in spite of the crushing of the crowd, which sometimes threatened to suffocate her, in spite of the great fatigue and exertion, did not cease, with tears in her eyes and despair in her face, to load with curses the murderer of her husband.” Fouquier looked at her, pale and livid; his face was drawn, his eyes feverish and wandering. He saw the heads of all his accomplices fall, and died the last. As soon as the knife had descended for the sixteenth time, an immense cry of “His head! His head!” rose from all parts of the Square. Sanson was obliged to show it to the people, who greeted it with a final cheer.<sup>2</sup>

The same day, the *juge de paix* of the Thermes quarter informed the widow Fouquier-Tinville that she must be present at the sealing of her husband's effects. The poor woman protested; she was without resources, and to confiscate to the Republic her furniture, clothes, and utensils would be to cast her and her children into the street. They took pity on her, as was but right; the furniture she had did certainly not represent the 10,000 livres she brought as her marriage portion.

A month later, before Me. de Saint Gille, Rue Condé, she

<sup>1</sup> *Library of the City of Paris.* Collection of autograph letters of Fouquier-Tinville, his wife, and daughter.

<sup>2</sup> *Le tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris*, by M. Campardon.

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renounced all rights to her husband's property, and remained a creditor of the estate, without any chance of ever being paid.<sup>1</sup> She set bravely to work to earn her own living. But for what work could this delicately-nurtured woman, who had evidently been brought up with a view to a better fate, be fit? It appears that whilst the old aunt took care of the children, she went out as a charwoman, and afterwards became servant to a linen-drapeer. One of the twins—Antoine Henry—died; the girl grew up in poverty; she was a lively and good-tempered child, and adored her mother. As soon as she was old enough to hold a needle, she was sent to some dressmaker, and these poor women continued to live thus, resigned, and hard-working. No one spoke of them.

Meanwhile, Fouquier-Tinville's son by his first marriage—the young volunteer who had enlisted at sixteen—continued his career in the army; a somewhat chequered career, on which there was always a kind of fatality, though he had suppressed half of his terrible name, and called himself simply Quentin Fouquier. He went through the campaigns in the Nord, and in Vendée, then was with the army of the Rhine. In five years he had gained the rank of officer: his promotion to sub-lieutenant is dated the 8th of Fructidor, Year VII. He was, in the Year VIII., with the army of Helvetia; in the Year IX. in Italy. He was, perhaps, already dreaming of honours and glory, when, in the Year XI., the “*senatus consultum*” proclaiming Bonaparte consul for life was submitted to the free approbation of the French people. Fouquier voted “No,” and was at once put on half-pay, struck off the army list, sent to his own Department (Aisne) under the surveillance of the political police, and forbidden to leave it except by order of the General commanding that division.<sup>2</sup> It is quite a miracle that he

<sup>1</sup> Papers of Me. Desmonts, notary at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Here is the letter in which this act of rigour is announced:

“82nd half-brigade of Infantry of the Line. Guingamp, the 10th of Vendémiaire, year XI. (Oct. 2nd, 1802). The commander of the 82nd half-brigade to Citizen Fouquier, sub-lieutenant.

“I regret to inform you, citizen, that, in execution of Government orders, transmitted by General of brigade, Loriet, you are permitted to go on half-pay, that from this day you are struck off the rolls of the half-brigade,

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escaped the State prison. His punishment lasted two years; but then, as officers were badly wanted about the time of the creation of the camp at Boulogne, he was restored to his rank.

From that time Fouquier became a thorough type of those poor devils of soldiers who, without hope of fortune, high rank, or title, trotted all over Europe after Napoleon. He started, in 1805, with the Grand Army; he was wounded at Friedland; at Essling he was hit by a shot which broke his left leg, and brought him the Legion of Honour, as well as his retirement with a pension of 1,200 francs.<sup>1</sup>

It took him three months to get back from Austria. The transport of departing troops was done rapidly, but the return of the crippled soldiers was, as may be imagined, not so well organised. Those who could not walk and could not afford to take the post had to rely on the pity of peasants or the kindness of some richer comrade to get from town to town, and in this manner Captain Fouquier returned to France. Where was he to go? He settled at Saint-Quentin, near his uncle, Fouquier de Forest, a worthy man whose life had been a hard one, and who occupied a small post at the Mairie. But he was bored to death there, and could not make up his

and that consequently you must return to your department, which you are not to leave without orders.

"I request you, in your own interests, to obey without murmuring an order which circumstances have rendered necessary. Personally, I am sorry to see removed from the corps an officer like you, for whom I have had nothing but praise since my arrival here. MIQUEL."—*Archives of the Ministry of War.*

<sup>1</sup> Services of Pierre Quentin Fouquier, son of Antoine Quentin and Geneviève Saugnier, born at Paris, July 17th, 1776.

At the battle of Essling, May 22nd, 1809, bullet wound in right knee; considerable lameness; fracture of the tibia of the left leg.

Entered the service at the age of sixteen, in the 76th brigade of the line, August 1st, 1792; promoted sergeant in the 104th of the line the 24th of Ventôse, Year VII.; sub-lieutenant the 8th of Fructidor, Year VII.; passed to the 3rd regiment of the line the 11th of Ventôse, Year XII.; lieutenant the 26th of Brumaire, Year XIV.; captain, June 9th, 1808; Legion of Honour, August 8th, 1809.

Served in the campaigns of the Army of the Nord, Years II. and III.; those of the West, IV. and V.; of the Rhine, VI. and VII.; Helvetia, VIII.; Italy, IX. and X.; England and the West, XII. and XIII., and three months from Vendémiaire, Year XIV.; since then, until 1809, with the Grand Army; wounded at Friedland, June 14th, 1807; gunshot wound in the left hand, April 19th, 1809, at Iann; wounded at Essling; retired in 1809—1,200 francs.—*Archives of the Ministry of War.*

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mind, at the age of thirty-four, to renounce the military career for ever. He came to Paris, stayed at the Hôtel de Russie, Rue Tiquetonne, and obtained an order to leave for Spain. Before he started for Madrid he had a bullet, which had lodged for three years in his right calf, extracted. A year later he reappeared at Saint-Quentin, emaciated, without a penny, slashed with sabre-cuts, and with no promotion. He was still obstinate; went again to Paris to beg for employment, and, as he had plenty of spare time, took the opportunity to get married. He wedded a Mlle. Marie Gripray, September 17th, 1812, and two months later took her to Italy, where he had at last obtained a small post in the recruiting department of the reserve companies of the Apennines.

Then came the great crash, and we find the Fouquier household at Marseilles in May 1814 landing from a ship which had brought back hastily all the waifs and strays belonging to the administration of the Cis-alpine Departments. Captain Fouquier was without resources; he brought back with him a son, born at Genoa, and wished to return to Paris, but at Aix his wife gave birth to a second child. Obligated to stop there a month, he left the child at nurse and its mother in the hospital; returned to Paris in the midst of "the White Terror," and wrote to the Minister of War a letter which was as eloquent as it was clumsy, requesting to be enrolled in the King's Guards. One passage deserves quoting: "My desire to participate in the honour of approaching His Majesty is the more just and the more ardent in that I belong to a family known for its attachment to the House of Bourbon!" At the same time he addressed to H.R.H. the Duc de Berry another petition in these words:—

"My Prince,—

"Deign to allow a soldier who has never deviated from the principles of honour, and who belongs to a family known for its attachment to its legitimate sovereigns, to solicit entrance into one of the regiments destined to guard the Throne and support your august dynasty. A victim,



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during seventeen months, to the fury of the Usurper, for having refused to sign the act of the consulship for life," etc.<sup>1</sup>

Inquiries were made as to this Fouquier who came of a stock "so devoted to the royal family," and it was found out that his father was the man of the bloody tribunal. The only reply made to his application was to forbid him to stay in Paris. He returned to Aix and remained there two years, during which time he pertinaciously continued to send in petitions. In 1818 we find him journeying towards the north of France by short stages; his intention was to reach Saint-Quentin and settle there. No doubt he was made to understand that at a time when the royalist reaction was in full swing his sojourn there would be impossible; he stopped at Beaumont-sur-Oise and remained there, not knowing what to do, and comprehending at last that he was, to all who knew his origin, as much a pariah as the son of the executioner.

He had no friends; he lived idle, gloomy, and silent. People who sauntered on the promenades would often meet a man who was still young, limped badly, and wore the cross of the Legion of Honour on his big cloak—and was always alone! He died at the age of fifty, April 24th, 1826, leaving his widow in poverty, with a son who was not thirteen years old. The poor woman, seeing no hope in the future, implored the Minister to grant her some assistance as the widow of an officer. She did not get anything, having no right to a pension; and then she thought of looking for her husband's stepmother, whom she knew to be still living in Paris.

The widow of the Public Accuser had not been more fortunate; although her husband at the point of death had authorised her "not to throw away any opportunity of improving her condition," no one had any idea of marrying a woman who had been loved by Fouquier-Tinville. For a long time she continued to work, living from day to day, and having no assured income but an annuity of 200 francs. In the Year XIV., Aunt Henriette died in a hospital in the Faubourg Saint-Martin.<sup>2</sup> Mme. Fouquier was left alone with her

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of War.*

<sup>2</sup> Private information.

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daughter, who had grown up to be a pretty work-girl,—but from whom she was soon to be separated. She sent her to Bourges, where she was in the service of a Mme. Dumont-Duponchel, who grew attached to the young girl,—who bore the name of Henriette Fouquier d'Aucourt. Did people know that she was born in the midst of the Terror, at the Tribunal itself, in those gloomy towers which men hurried by without daring to lift their eyes? Did she know it herself? Did she know who her father was? It does not appear that she was ever informed; the few letters that she wrote from Bourges, addressed to her mother, are gay, charming, and well-written.<sup>1</sup> Then comes a sudden and mysterious catastrophe. In 1812 this amiable young woman is married to a Sieur Pinel, and there is a heart-broken letter from her. Her husband abuses, insults, and strikes her—did *he* know?—and on this crumpled paper are these words, in the handwriting of Mme. Fouquier-Tinville: “Letter from my poor daughter, written two days before her death, and which she made me take from under her mattress the day she died.” But in this letter there is not a word concerning any illness or disease. What strange drama is concealed here, amongst so many other dramas?

Mme. Fouquier-Tinville lived alone; in 1826 she had resided for the last fifteen years in two rooms on the sixth floor looking on to the courtyard at No. 9 Rue Chabanais.<sup>2</sup> She paid 250 francs rent. In the hall was a deal table, three rush-bottomed chairs, and an old armchair covered in ragged tapestry. In the bed-room were found the wrecks of more prosperous days; the console table with the marble top, the chiffonier, and the rosewood chest of drawers, with “two large and two small drawers” which had figured, forty years before, in the apartment of Dorothee Saugnier, in the Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve and followed Fouquier-Tinville to the Palais de Justice. The courtyard of the house, crushed between four walls, and dark as a well, looked lost when

<sup>1</sup> *Library of the City of Paris.* MSS. Collection of autograph letters of Fouquier-Tinville, his wife, and daughter.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the registrar of the justice de paix of the 9th Arrondissement.*

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viewed from such a high point, in damp obscurity. We can imagine the old woman, seated at her window, with no other horizon than the gutters and roofs, thinking of the past : of the first chance meeting with the tragic character whose name she was to bear ; of the comfortable house in the Rue des Postes where she married, full of illusions as to her coming life ; of the people who were present that day, and who signed the contract, all of whose names had an aristocratic sound—the Montauzons of Saint-Cyr, the Lamperières of Saint-Aubin, Baronne de Mehégan, M. Le Camus de Mézières, and many others, of the circle in which she ought to have moved. What had become of them all ?

Ill and discouraged, for a long time past she had ceased to work ; but being unable to exist on her small income she had solicited and obtained from the *Chambre des Avoués* an annual grant of 200 francs as the widow of a former procurator. After her rent was paid she had fourpence a day left. At the end of 1826 she decided to ask her husband's family for assistance. She obtained 200 francs in answer to her first application but her subsequent letters received no reply.

An old woman, Mme. Sebire, who lived in the house, came in the morning to do the house-work. She brought with her bread and milk, and often advanced a few pence for sausages, fruit, or wood.<sup>1</sup> At one time Mme. Fouquier-Tinville owed her 35 francs. To reduce this debt, she came down from the sixth floor—it was the 11th of February, 1827—and dragged herself to the office of M. Décénice, agent of the Mont de Piété, Rue Neuve des Petits Champs ; she left a silver watch, and received 12 francs.<sup>2</sup> On June 14th she handed two sheets and a table-cloth to old mother Sebire, who pawned them for 9 francs. Next it was a white dress, a merino shawl, curtains.<sup>3</sup> Everything that she had of any value found its way to the pawnshop. Mme. Fouquier thus managed to pay her quarter's rent in October, but she owed 40 francs to

<sup>1</sup> Papers of Me. Plicque, notary at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> The same.

<sup>3</sup> Inventory of the papers found in the apartment of Mme. Fouquier de Tinville. Tickets for articles pawned with Me. Décénice, agent of the Mont de Piété.

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Dr. Arbel for ten visits, 7 francs to the washerwoman, and 17 francs at the fruit-shop.<sup>1</sup>

Saturday, November 17th, about three o'clock in the afternoon, she rose from her arm-chair, crossed the room, and fell on the bed. Mother Sebire ran in on hearing the noise; Mme. Fouquier had been struck down by apoplexy; she died a few moments later without having regained consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

The charwoman called the upholsterer, Robert, whose shop was on the ground floor, and the two of them, after having placed the body on the bed, held counsel. They decided to send a messenger to the widow of Pierre Quentin, who lived at Beaumont-sur-Oise, and of whom the deceased had often spoken. The messenger did not return till the evening of the 18th, bringing back word that the "relatives down there claimed nothing and would pay nothing." Upon which Robert went and informed the *juge de paix*, who sealed up the effects.<sup>3</sup>

They took an inventory of the poor woman's wardrobe; and two of the men picked out the best of three sheets they found in the cupboard, to serve as a winding-sheet. In the chest of drawers were 200 francs in five-franc pieces—no doubt the allowance sent two days before by the *Chambre des Avoués*—two chemises, a torn shawl, a score of books, dresses of various stuffs, a torn handkerchief, five badly-worn amongst others the "Tales" of Marmontel, the "Analogy of Religion and Nature," the "Henriade," and the "History of Saint Paul"; and, finally, an old silk tricolour flag, that, perhaps, on the "Day of Reason" and the "Fête of the Supreme Being" had flown from the windows of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The burial, preceded by a short service at the Church of St. Roch, took place on November 20th, and two months later the seals were removed at the request of the Administration of Domains. The effects were sold for the benefit of the State, and realised 322 francs 20 c.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papers of Me. Plicque.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the justice de paix of the 9th Arrondissement.* Papers sealed after the decease of Mme. Henriette Daucourt, widow of M. Fouquier de Tinville, 9 Rue de Chabannais.

<sup>3</sup> The same.

<sup>4</sup> Papers of Me. Plicque, notary at Paris.

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Me. Delavenay, notary at Beaumont, was authorised by his client, the widow of Pierre Quentin, to claim the 200 francs a year, in which Mme. Fouquier-Tinville only had a life interest.<sup>1</sup> There was, in fact, a direct heir to the property of the Public Accuser—a grandson, whom we have mentioned, who was born at Genoa in 1813. His name was Jules Quentin Fouquier; when he was eighteen he enlisted, and we find his name on the roll of the 4th Regiment of the Line during the campaign in Algeria. He was discharged in 1835<sup>2</sup> on account of delicate health. He married a Mlle. Françoise Vasseur and settled in Paris, where he died in 1849.

Of the seven children Fouquier-Tinville had by his two marriages, only one daughter—by his first wife—was left alive in 1830. This was Emilie Françoise, born in the Rue Bourbon-Ville-Neuve, December 7th, 1778. She had never, so to speak, lived with her father. She was brought up by her uncles in the Aisne, where she remained until—poor and pursued by fatality like her brothers and sisters—she was obliged to procure herself a place as a shop-girl in an establishment at Château-Thierry. When she became old, Emilie Fouquier lost her situation, and was sheltered by a charitable lady who lived at Vervins. Old people there can still remember the daughter of the Public Accuser; she was very quiet, always dressed in black, and went regularly to Mass every morning. If anyone alluded to her father in her presence she was quite ready to speak about him. “My papa was very good,” she said. It is said that in leaving the church she often met the sister of poor Lucile Desmoulins—Mlle. Duplessis—who also resided at Vervins. But there was an old revolutionary hatred between the two ladies, who never even bowed to each other.

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the justice de paix of the 9th Arrondissement.*

<sup>2</sup> His service notes are: “Fouquier (Quentin Jules), last residence at Beaumont-sur-Oise, son of the late Pierre Quentin and Marie Gripray, domiciled at Beaumont-sur-Oise. Born April 19th, 1813, at Genoa; joined regiment October 11th, 1831, as a volunteer, enlisted at the *mairie* of Beaumont-sur-Oise, September 8th preceding. Grenadier, January 11th, 1832; corporal, January 2nd, 1833; quartermaster, May 2nd, 1834. Embarked on the ‘Victoire’ December 15th, 1831; disembarked at Algiers the 22nd of the said month. Embarked on the ‘Agathe,’ June 7th, 1834; disembarked at Marseille the 18th of the said month. Discharged, being then home on a six months’ leave, April 18th, 1835.”—*Archives of the Ministry of War.*

## PORTRAITS OF WOMEN

About 1850 Emilie Fouquier became blind; after the death of her protectress she left Vervins and settled at Saint-Quentin. She died there August 5th, 1856.<sup>1</sup> In her room was found a copper medal of the Virgin, to which was attached a card bearing these words in the handwriting of Mme. Fouquier-Tinville: "He wore it round his neck the day he procured the condemnation of Widow Capet."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "This day, August 6th, 1856, at nine in the morning. Before us, first deputy-mayor of the town of Saint-Quentin, appeared the Sieurs Arnould, Jules Marin Leproux, proprietor, aged 46, and Louis Victor Belsem, advocate, aged 44, living at Saint-Quentin, who have declared that Emilie Françoise Fouquier de Tinville, *rentière*, aged 77 years and 8 months, born at Paris in the former parish of Bonne Nouvelle, December 7th, 1778, domiciled at Saint-Quentin, Place de Cepy, No. 17, died at her residence yesterday at five in the evening, and that she was the daughter of the late Antoine Fouquier de Tinville, and of Geneviève Dorothine (*sic*) Saugnier his wife. And this declaration having been read over to them, the first appearer second cousin to the defunct, and the second, her friend, have signed with us."—*Extract from the register of deaths of the town of Saint-Quentin.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Vervins*; and private fo ma-tion.

## JOHN

"THE Sea-lion," and "Milord Phantom," were the names bestowed by the sailors of the Republic on Commodore Sidney Smith, who, in 1795, commanded the English squadron cruising off the coast of Normandy. French sailors who had never much believed in Robespierre's "Supreme Being," made up for it by being fully convinced that the enemy's admiral—the man who had burned Toulon—was the devil in person, such fame had his boldness, skill, and good luck gained for him. He supplied the Chouans under the very noses of the Revenue officers; picked up fugitive royalists all along the coast; and carried conspirators between England and France. His flag-vessel, the *Diamond*, would be sighted at night off the Isles Saint-Marcouf, and at dawn the next day would be off Dieppe. The ships which tried to pursue him seemed doomed to disaster from tempests, wrecks, or explosions of their powder magazines.

But, on April 19th, 1796, the townsfolk of Havre were greatly excited by hearing some astounding news: Sidney Smith was taken! Assisted by five or six gunboats, he had been bold enough to make a night-attack on the frigate *Vengeur*, which was anchored in the roadstead. He captured her, and was making off with his prize, when a change of wind and the rising tide drove him into the Seine. Some longboats and the lugger *Renard* came out of port, and pursued him. A corvette, commanded by Captain Le Loup, came up with Sidney Smith's vessel; the crew boarded it, and the admiral surrendered.<sup>1</sup> Le Loup took him prisoner in the name of the Republic, along with his officers, his secretary—who said his

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6150.



SIR SIDNEY SMITH.





name was Wright—and a young man of twenty-four who passed as the admiral's servant, but was in reality a French *émigré*—Jacques Jean Marie François de Tromelin, a Breton gentleman, formerly an officer in the Limousin regiment, who was on board the *Diamond* “for his pleasure.”

Tromelin had already been through plenty of adventures. He left France at the beginning of 1792, and had followed the princes in the Argonne campaign. Later, as an officer in the royal army of Brittany, he had escaped the wholesale massacre of the vanquished at Quiberon, and had profited by a moment's respite to get married. Certain of being shot if recognised and captured in the territory of the Republic, he took refuge in London, where he earned a small pittance by giving drawing-lessons. He was introduced to Sir Sidney Smith, who, quickly taking a liking to him, took him on board his vessel for the 1796 campaign.

When the French sailors boarded the *Diamond*, on the night of April 18th, Tromelin thought he was lost. Captured on an enemy's vessel, proscribed and outlawed, he was certain to be shot within twenty-four hours. But in a moment Sidney Smith had called together his crew to give them his last orders: “M. de Tromelin will pass as my servant.”

“But he knows hardly any English!”

“All right! he shall be a Canadian, and his name shall be *John Bromley*.”<sup>1</sup>

These final instructions were religiously obeyed. None of the men there, whom a hard captivity awaited, thought of purchasing better treatment by revealing the secret, and when the French officers boarded the vessel, the only persons presented to them were Wright, the secretary, and the officers of the ship. As for “John Bromley,” he had slipped into the cabin the moment he was named servant, and was busy packing “his master's” effects in a portmanteau. Nobody paid any attention to him, and when he came on deck carrying a valise in his hand, the ship was inside Havre jetty.

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F7, 6423. “It was arranged in a moment between the sailors and the remaining officers that I should pass for a servant, and that I should say I was born in Canada.”—Tromelin's statement, April 1804.

## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

All the population of the town had assembled to see the landing of the famous "Milord Phantom." As soon as he set foot on the gangway he was met with a loud shout of "Vive la République!" Sidney Smith replied with "unending marks of politeness and salutations"; and when someone asked him why he who was so clever had ventured on an expedition so unworthy of his talents, he answered that "he had nothing else to do, and wanted to amuse himself by trying that sort of sport."<sup>1</sup> Besides, he was glad that fortune had given him the opportunity to reside in France, in one of those prisons which had acquired such a tragic reputation all over the world, during the last three years. He found "some amusement in the novelty of the situation"; it was a picturesque chapter added to the romance of his life, and he declared that he was curious to know "how the affair would turn out."

John continued to pass unnoticed. He was watched so little, that he had a great mind to run away that day, but he did nothing of the kind; followed his master to the hotel appointed for his residence, and proved himself an attentive and devoted servant, though Sidney Smith, to keep up the character, treated him rudely enough. That same evening, the Commodore and his secretary were put in a post-chaise, in company with a brigadier, and, escorted by a detachment of gendarmes, started for Paris. John sat on the box, and chatted familiarly with the postilions, who laughed much at his foreign airs, and amused themselves by giving him "his first lesson in French." After a short stay at Rouen, Smith, Captain Wright, and John Bromley arrived in Paris early in May. They were taken to the Abbaye Prison, where they remained six weeks; they were then transferred to the Temple, which they entered on July 3rd,<sup>2</sup> and the adventure at once became a romance.

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F7, 6150.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from the registers of the Temple Prison.

"15th of Messidor, Year IV. (July 3rd, 1796).

"In conformity with the letter of the Minister of the Interior, dated the 13th of this month, the keeper of the Temple Prison will receive the hereinafter named persons, coming from the Abbaye Prison.

"Sir William Sidney, commander, Grand Cross of the military order of the Sword of Sweden, captain in the English service, commanding the

Since Jacques Molay's sombre donjon had served as the prison of the royal family, and, after that, of a good many others, it was no longer a spectral, stone relic of bygone ages standing in one of the most crowded quarters of Paris.

The tragedies of the Revolution had revived and rejuvenated it, and all who, since August 13th, 1792, had, from motives of self-interest or sympathy, tried to enter into communication with the prisoners had left traces of their ingenuity. Four years of clandestine stratagems had made the purlieus of the prison as full of tricks as a conjurer's stage; and if Sidney Smith expected any surprises he was certain not to be deceived.

On the very first night, as he was taking the air behind his prison bars, his attention was drawn to a bright light in a widely-opened window on the third floor of a house in the Rue de la Corderie. Shadows passed and repassed in the room, and very soon he saw a sheet stretched across the back of the room, and on this sheet gigantic letters were thrown by a magic lantern, and words and sentences spelled out letter by letter. These signals, on account of the height, and the distance from the prison, could only be seen from the upper storeys of the Tower; and this device had, it appears, been practised three years, after the last round had been made, without any gaoler, or any of the soldiers who kept guard at the foot of the Tower, having any suspicion of it. The apartment in the Rue de la Corderie—the only one which commanded a view of that side of the Temple—had been occupied, since 1793, by a royalist lady, Mme. Launoy, who lived there with her three daughters.<sup>1</sup> In the daytime, the Commodore saw them at the window, smiling and looking pretty. Regular communications were established between them and the prisoner; who, as he did not know their names, christened them Thalia, Clio, and Melpomene.

Sidney Smith and his faithful servant, John, thus learned that, at the news of her husband's arrest, young Mme. de squadron cruising in the Channel, native of London, thirty-two years of age. Prisoner of war.

"John Vesley Vright (*sic*) secretary to Commodore Sidney, and John Bromley, the Commodore's servant."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6423.

<sup>1</sup> Private information.

## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Tromelin had come to Paris and was staying in the house of which Mme. de Launoy occupied the third floor. The nocturnal telegraph was used to plan an escape. Some of their friends were now actively engaged in arranging it. Phélippeaux, the bold leader of the "Vendée sancerroise," had introduced to Mme. de Tromelin Hyde de Neuville, who had rescued him from the prison at Bourges on the eve of the day fixed for his execution. Hyde de Neuville—on whose head a price had been set—was living in Paris under the name of "Charles Loiseau."<sup>1</sup> He enlisted the services of his friend, Boïsgirard, who belonged to an excellent and very royalist family of Bourges, and who, to escape the attention of the police, had hit upon the ingenious plan of utilising his lithe and supple figure, and had applied for, and obtained, an engagement as a dancer at the Opéra.<sup>2</sup> Joined with them was Carlos Sourdat, one of Charrette's officers, born at Troyes, who had been boldly serving the royalist cause ever since 1792. All these young men were so accustomed to attempt impossible feats that their ordinary life seems to have been made up of almost improbable adventures.

The first, and most urgent, thing to be done was to rescue poor John, whom a chance recognition, a meeting, or a gesture of astonishment might at any moment ruin,<sup>3</sup> but who played his part with rare coolness and good-luck. Sidney Smith declared—and truthfully—that he "had never had such a servant." John forestalled his least wishes, and served him with a solicitude that was almost filial. The Commodore's rough ways, and even an occasional kick, when he was in a bad temper, did not alter John's deferential behaviour.<sup>4</sup> John was very popular throughout the prison, and as Lasne, the head-gaoler, allowed him to go out, many of the prisoners gave him "tips" to execute small commissions for them outside. Much interest was taken in his progress in French,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires et Souvenirs*, Hyde de Neuville.

<sup>2</sup> *Quinze ans de haute police sous le Consulat et l'Empire*, Desmarest.

<sup>3</sup> "Shut up in the Temple, my position was very critical. It was suspected there was an *émigré* among us: I might have been identified, tried, and shot within twenty-four hours. The need of preserving my life . . . aided my courage. I played my part with rare coolness and good-luck."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4623.

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoires de Rochecotte*.

which, it was unanimously agreed, he began "to smatter very fairly," and his simple remarks were repeated, and his blunders laughed at. The good fellow was not at all sensitive or "touchy"; he spent all the tips he received in drinking with the warders, with all of whom he was on the best of terms. He even courted the daughter of one of them, and it was arranged that he was to marry her as soon as he was at liberty and had found a good situation in Paris. Although the Temple had such a tragic reputation, and—as one of the heads of the police said—"devoured its inhabitants," it became almost a place of gaiety, and it seemed surprising that so much careless good-humour could exist in a prison.

The frequent interviews Mme. de Tromelin had with John, and her continual walks round the Temple, excited the suspicions of the police-spies, which were quickly allayed, however, for everybody in the quarter *knew* that the lady "was an English woman, much attached to Sidney Smith," and it was thought quite natural that he should correspond, by means of his servant, with his sorrowing mistress.<sup>1</sup> She, for her part, had not lost a day; she had found that the ground-floor of a house close to the prison-wall was to let. Hyde visited the place, ascertained that the cellar touched the prison-wall, and placed in the apartment a young girl, Mlle. D——, so pretty and pleasing that the other persons in the house were not at all surprised "Charles Loiseau" spent so many hours in her company. He almost lived in the cellar, and courageously set to work to dig a subterranean passage, large enough for a man to pass through, and which, according to his calculations, need not be more than twelve feet long.

He worked hard all day. Mlle. D—— was bringing up a little girl, seven years old, for whom Loiseau bought a good-sized drum, which he encouraged the child to beat with all her might, and the din she made filled the house, and covered the noise of the pickaxe, and the rattle of

<sup>1</sup> "It was then that my dear wife came to Paris to help me; she was supposed to be in love with Sidney Smith."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6423. *Examination of Tromelin*, in *Germinal*, Year XII.

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the falling stones. Hyde, however, began to be discouraged; he feared he was mistaken in his reckoning and was going wrong. The help of a mason was indispensable, and Mme. de Tromelin found one—an honest fellow who understood from half a hint what was wanted, and set to work. The first blow of his pick opened a breach; the whole of the Temple courtyard was exposed to view, and the sentinel on duty tumbled into the hole, was frightened, and gave the alarm. The soldiers ran to arms; but Hyde was on the look-out and quickly got Mme. de Tromelin, the workman, Mlle. D——, and the child with the drum out through a back-door. When the soldiers—who were obliged to go a long way round—entered the apartment, they found nothing but some trunks filled with logs of wood, a few bits of furniture of no value, and some clothes which nobody ever cared to claim.<sup>1</sup>

This freak made the gaolers suspicious. Orders came from the central office that the Commodore was to be more closely confined, and, to put a stop to his communications with the outside world, he was informed that he must, in future, do without the services of his domestic, who would be sent back to England. The news of this stroke of good luck was received by John and his master as though it had been the announcement of a catastrophe. Both played their parts in the most perfectly natural manner. On July 8th, 1797, when Brigadier Dumaltera, escorted by Gendarme Barthet, presented himself at the prison bearing a decree of the Directory ordering that “John Bromley, servant of Sir Sidney Smith, should be removed from the Temple, to be conducted from brigade to brigade, to the port of Dunkirk, and from there cross into England,” there ensued a scene which would have melted a heart of stone. John threw himself at his master’s feet, covered his hands with kisses, protested that he would never forget him, and swore, in the presence of the greatly-affected gaolers, that he would risk everything to get him out of prison. Sidney Smith appeared to be much moved, but remained dignified. He gave John some messages to his family, handed him a most

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenirs et Mémoires*, Hyde de Neuville.

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eulogistic certificate, and emptied his purse into his hands.<sup>1</sup>

The gendarmes, to mark their appreciation of the merits of such a servitor, treated him kindly all through the journey. Comte de Tromelin afterwards acknowledged that he had never travelled in greater safety and with less anxiety. He was an outlaw, and virtually under sentence of death—the mayor of any country village might have handed him over to the headsman, but he travelled under the safeguard and protection of all the gendarmes of the Republic. He embarked at Dunkirk on July 22nd; two days later he was in England, where he made but a short stay, being in a hurry to return to Normandy, whither Mme. de Tromelin had come to await him. But John Bromley was still heard of for some little time.<sup>2</sup> The police of the Directory opened, and had translated, all the letters sent from England to Sidney Smith by his relatives, and they, forewarned by Tromelin, prolonged the mystification. Never did a company act better together. “We cannot imagine”—Sir Douglas Smith wrote to his brother on the 25th of August—“we cannot imagine what new whim of yours has made you get rid of your faithful John. I learn from mother that he is going to Portsmouth to fetch his clothes, after which he is going to take a trip in the country to see his friends.” On September 3rd, Uncle Edward Smith also improved the occasion. “John Bromley,” he wrote, “has been here. To separate him from you was not an act which did honour to the Directory, and I should have thought the French nation would have shown more consideration to misfortune and bravery. He went at once to see your mother; the poor fellow was in great haste to bring news of you to your friends; there is a year and a half’s wages due to him whilst in your service.”

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Rochecotte and Memoirs of Hyde de Neuville.*

“This day, the 20th of Messidor, Year V., we, Joseph Dumaltera, brigadier, and Jean Barthet, gendarme, residing at Paris, in conformity with a decree of the Directory, of the 3rd of Messidor have removed from the Temple Prison, John Bromley, domestic of Commodore Sidney Smith, to be conducted from brigade to brigade to the port of Dunkirk, and from there cross into England.”—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6423.

<sup>2</sup> “Soon after I left, my wife quitted Paris to come to Normandy, where I had promised to meet her, and I remained at Caen several months absolutely unknown.”—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4623. *Examination of Tromelin.* Germinal, Year XII.



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These letters, and others of the same tenour, fully satisfied the police of the Directory, who suspected nothing, and meanwhile Tromelin quietly landed at Caen, returning to France provided with unlimited credit on Harris, the banker in the Rue du Bac, and determined to try all possible means to release Sidney Smith and Captain Wright. He remained six months in Normandy, to arrange for the Commodore's passage to England as soon as he got out of the Temple. This point—the most difficult of all—being settled, Tromelin went to Paris, where he rejoined his friends, Carlos Sourdat, the Launoy ladies, Hyde de Neuville, Phélippeaux, and the dancer Boisgirard. The band had been further reinforced by the Chouan Legrand de Palluau, one of Phélippeaux's lieutenants in the "Vendée sancerroise," and Laban, formerly an officer with Stofflet, who had been hurriedly called from Brittany to Paris to take part in the plot.<sup>1</sup>

Phélippeaux and the Launoy ladies had all the time kept up telegraphic communications with the prisoners. The royalist Lasne, who was head gaoler of the Temple, was, on the 18th of Fructidor, succeeded by the Jacobin Antoine Boniface, who was delighted to find that the Revolution he had been grumbling at for five years had at length given him a good place, and established himself in his new post like a conqueror taking possession of a vanquished country. Unfortunately, he brought with him Mme. Boniface, a woman with authoritative manners but a sensitive heart, and whom the misfortunes, the fame, and the aristocratic British bearing of the Commodore touched more than they should have done. The gaoler was induced by his wife to grant extraordinary privileges to the prisoner, who was allowed to go out of the prison on parole, "for a walk, to take baths,<sup>2</sup> to dine in the city and even to go shooting." Sidney Smith never failed to keep his word of honour, and returned at night to his cell.

It should be here mentioned that all the other English

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6150.

<sup>2</sup> The 28th of Germinal, Year VI. "It is highly improper to allow Sidney Smith to go out of the Temple to take baths."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6150.

prisoners had been transferred to the prison of Fontainebleau; the Commodore and his secretary alone were not removed from the Temple, where, being the most important prisoners, they were more under the eye of the police, who were suspicious that "something was brewing." The prisoners were under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Marine, who was then Pléville-Le-Peley—a weak, sickly, bent old man, who wanted to resign his post, and did not show any ardour in the discharge of his functions. Before leaving for Lille, where the Peace Conference was being held, he had signed some blank forms in case they should be needed during his absence, and, of course, these forms were on the official headed paper and bore the office seal. One of these forms was stolen from the Minister's table—most probably by the Dalmatian, Wiscovisch, "a spy of all work, trouble to write personally to his colleague of the Police to warn him charitably that rumours were current at the Temple that "Sidney Smith would escape before ten days were over."

He was wrong by only a few hours.<sup>1</sup> The adventure has become legendary, and at each fresh recital is enriched by some fanciful details. The account here given is condensed from the original documents alone. On April 24th, 1798, about eight o'clock in the evening, there stopped before the door of the Temple prison one of those immense cabs which can accommodate a whole family. By the side of the driver sat a man in civilian dress, with his hat pulled down over his eyes—it was Tromelin. Inside were Phélippeaux in a large dark cloak, the dancer Boisgirard, dressed in the uniform of a staff-officer, and his comrade Legrand, in the costume of a captain of Voltigeurs. The two soldiers got out of the cab, and entered the prison, leaving in the carriage the two civilians—who were evidently

<sup>1</sup> The Minister of Marine to the Minister of Police. "I have been informed by a private person, that Commodore Sidney Smith, imprisoned at the Temple, will escape in ten days, and that he is allowed to go out to supper in the city. . . . I must request you to order that an officer should be set to guard him, and another to watch the gaoler and prevent him granting leave of absence until I have been able to obtain more ample and more certain information respecting this prisoner and his secretary," etc.—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6150.

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police-inspectors. Such an incident was of such common occurrence that it did not even interest the soldiers off duty hanging about the doorway; and they were all the less astonished because they saw, hovering round the carriage, the ugly faces of several of the hang-dog looking police-spies who were always about every State prison at the arrival or departure of any prisoner. That evening the "ugly faces" were those of Hyde de Neuville, Laban,<sup>1</sup> Sourdat, and Wiscovich.

The two soldiers entered the office of the prison, and showed the respectful Boniface the following order.

" *Paris, the 5th of Floreal, Year VI.*

"The Minister of Marine and the Colonies to Citizen Boniface, head-gaoler of the Temple.

"The Executive Directory having ordered, by its decree of the 28th of Ventôse, sent herewith, that all English prisoners of war, without distinction of rank, should be collected into one prison, I charge you, citizen, to consign forthwith to the bearer of the present order, Citizen Etienne Armand Auger, Commodore Sidney Smith and Captain Wright, prisoners of war, to be transferred to the general prison of the Department of Seine-et-Marne, at Fontainebleau.

"You are enjoined, citizen, to observe the greatest secrecy in the execution of the present order, of which I have informed the Minister of Police, in order to prevent any attempt to rescue the prisoners whilst on their journey.

"The Minister of Marine and Colonies

"PLÉVILLE-LEPELEY."<sup>2</sup>

The signature—a very characteristic one—was evidently authentic. Boniface handed the document to the clerk, who copied it in full in the prison register, and an order was given to bring down the two Englishmen.

The man who went to fetch them found Sidney Smith

<sup>1</sup> "Phélippeaux had chosen, to aid him in the plot, a very active opera dancer named Boisgirard, and my uncle, Laban, who had been hurriedly called from Vendée to Paris to take part in the affair."—*Mémoires du Maréchal Canrobert*, Germain Bapst.

<sup>2</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6150.

engaged in reading "Gil Blas." The Commodore had been informed, two days before, that everything was ready for the escape, and that "he had nothing to do but leave it to them." He raised his head and asked, "What they wanted with him at such a late hour?" To which the warder laconically replied that "They would tell him that down below." When he came into the office, the Commodore saluted the officers, and learned from them that they had orders to transfer him to another prison.

"Where are you going to take me?" he asked.

The report of the dialogue which ensued is taken from the account which he afterwards published.<sup>1</sup>

"To Fontainebleau," replied Boniface.

"Oh, that is not far. You will come and see me, won't you? And my clothes and books—you had better send them to me, it is not worth while taking them with me to-night."

Then he shook hands all round, and distributed tips. Mme. Boniface was much troubled, and her husband to hide his emotion, pretended to compare the Minister's order with the copy. Wright also came down; the staff-officer signed the name of "Auger" in the release-book, and the prisoners took their last farewells of the officials. All were much affected, and the officer of the prison-guard—who perhaps suspected some irregularity—to put an end to a painful scene, ordered six of his men to get ready to form an escort. This would have ruined everything. The Commodore could not restrain an involuntary movement, and everybody guessed that "a suspicion of a private and immediate execution had passed through his mind." "Auger" interposed to remove this bad effect. "Citizens," he said with a theatrical gesture, "the word of honour suffices between soldiers." Then, addressing Smith: "Commodore! you are an officer; so am I. Give me your word of honour and we can do without an escort."

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith*, 1839. *The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir William S. Smith*, 1848. *The Naval Chronicle*, and the *European Magazine* of 1799 and 1800 published Sidney Smith's own account. (See also *Quinze ans de haute police* by Desmarets, edition annotated by Léonce Grasilie, and an article by M. Victor Piéché, "Deux-officiers de la marine anglaise au Temple" in the *Correspondant*, October, 1894.

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"Sir," replied the Englishman, "I swear on my honour to accompany you wherever you wish to take me." And this was said with so much warmth and sincerity that all suspicions were fully allayed.

The door opened and they came out; the prisoners and the two officers got into the cab, which started off. In turning the first corner, the cabman who had been ordered to "drive fast," ran into the shop front of a fruiterer, and knocked over a child. There was much excitement, a crowd collected, and cries of "Stop! Take him to the police station," &c., were raised. The two Englishmen and their liberators jumped out of the cab, pushed their way through the crowd, and fled, after having slipped a double louis in mistake for a thirty *sous* piece into the hand of the cabman, who was as much amazed as the crowd to see the six late occupants of his cab, two of whom were officers, hastily scuttling off in different directions. Nothing happened to them, however; and an hour later Sidney Smith was concealed in a house, situated, it is said, in the Rue de l'Université. He waited there till the next day, then hid himself for three days, "in a wood in the neighbourhood of Paris."<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, as no fuss was made about the escape, he reached Rouen, and embarked with Wright and Phélippeaux. Tromelin returned to Caen, where his wife had just given birth to a child; the others remained in Paris, more disturbed by the inaction of the police than they would have been by its pursuit, and rather vexed to hear no talk of their exploit, which, they prided themselves, deserved some fame. Not a newspaper made any allusion to it, not a placard was posted.

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F7, 6150.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Citizen Magnus Lombergue, captain of the packet-boat *La Maria*, attached to the letter of the commissary of the Directory belonging to the municipal administration of Gravelines, dated the 1st of Prairial, Year VI.

"Citizen Magnus Lombergue, captain of the packet-boat *La Maria*, which left the port of Dover at two o'clock yesterday morning, has declared that Commodore Smith, who escaped from the Temple Prison, was accompanied by a French *émigré*, whose name he does not know; that he passed three days in a wood near Paris, that he afterwards went to the neighbourhood of Havre or Brest, where he embarked on board a boat; and that the following morning, at some distance from the coast, he met an English frigate, which took him on board, and conducted him to Portsmouth."—*National Archives*, F7, 6150.

The Temple maintained its ordinary appearance as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened, and the police did not suspect what a trick had been played them.

As a matter of fact, the police suspected nothing, and this ignorance was the happy result of the perfect working of the Governmental machine. On April 25th, the day after the departure of Sidney Smith, head-gaoler Boniface, in his *quintuple* daily report, had informed the Central Bureau and the Minister of Police, furnished a copy of the order signed by the Minister, and also advised the military authorities and the commissariat. The same day the members of the Central Bureau came to inspect the prison as they did every week. They examined the books and "passed" them; and they drew up a report of their visit, accompanied by a detailed account of the "present condition" of the prison. All these documents had been registered, read, docketed, pigeon-holed, and duly answered. Eight days later—on May 3rd—it chanced that Merlin, the governor of the prison, had invited his doctor to dinner, and, in the course of conversation, the doctor asked how Sir Sidney (whom he had visited professionally once a month) liked being at Fontainebleau.<sup>1</sup> Astonishment of Merlin. "At Fontainebleau!" Messengers were called and sent in every direction; the Directory demanded an immediate explanation from Dondeau, the Minister of Police, who applied to the Central Bureau, which sent off to the Minister of Marine, who obtained information from the Temple; and finally the whole affair was known, just in time to prevent it being read in the English newspapers, which announced the triumphal entry into London of the Commodore and his companions. All England exulted, and at Astley's Theatre, a play entitled "The Lucky Escape, or the Return to the Native Country"—in which the police of the Directory were held up to ridicule—was acted eight hundred times. The police were indeed hard hit—so hard that they did not dare to make matters worse by looking for the guilty parties. Boniface was the only victim; he lost his post and was arrested. Prosperity had rather mollified his Jacobinism, but when he found himself deprived of his

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Rochecotté.*

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place, he became a fierce advocate of anarchy. That did not do him any good, for he was transported after the affair of the infernal machine, and died in the Seychelles Isles in the Year XII<sup>1</sup>

As to the faithful John, he became a Turk. Sidney Smith was not ungrateful, and took all his liberators to Constantinople, where Tromelin met again Phélippeaux, Legrand, and Wiscovich. To fight against Bonaparte, who had invaded Syria, was to help the royal cause, and Tromelin therefore requested Sultan Selim to make him an officer in the Ottoman service. He was appointed major in the infantry, and succeeded Phélippeaux, who was killed at St. Jean d'Acre, as lieutenant-colonel. Bonaparte being driven off, Tromelin joined Captain Pacha Hussein, and went through the Egyptian and Syrian campaigns with him. His wanderings lasted four years, at the end of which time he was seized with home-sickness, and set sail for France. His name had been struck off the list of *émigrés* since 1802, and the amnesty which had been granted gave him assurance that his future life would be undisturbed. He landed at Morlaix, and saw once more his old *château* of Coatserho, where he was born, and where he resolved to live peaceably, along with his wife, who had given so many proofs of her devotion, and his two sons, who were both born while he was an outlaw, and whose lives he hoped would be less exciting than his own. He intended to pass the rest of his life in peace and quietness: but fate ordained otherwise. Three weeks later—on April 11th, 1804, at eleven o'clock at night, the gendarmes from Morlaix, under the command of a delegate of the general commissary of police of Brest, rang at the front door, woke up all the household, arrested Pacha John Tromelin, and carried him off in a post-chaise. On the 15th he was locked up in the Abbaye Prison, charged with "being in communication with the enemies of the State,"—a peculiarly odious offence at that time, when Georges Cadoudal was being tried, and every person freshly arrived in the country was suspected by the police of being a probable assassin of the Consul.

<sup>1</sup> His wife died in poverty at Besançon, some time later.

His replies during the two examinations he underwent seemed to show that he was weary of and disgusted with the adventurous life he had been leading. At first he was reserved, and his answers were very laconic; but afterwards—knowing that he was protected by the amnesty, he related the whole of his life, and the police learnt for the first time the true identity of John Bromley, which had hitherto never been suspected. Tromelin's conduct was loyal and correct; the only persons he named were Phélippeaux, who was dead, and the Englishmen who were out of reach,<sup>1</sup> and when he was asked which of his accomplices had dared to act the parts of the officers, he replied, "Two obscure individuals," thus saving the lives of his two friends, for Legrand had at that time returned home to Valençay, and Boisgirard continued to dance at the Opéra. Indeed, if we may believe Réal's statement, the grateful Sidney Smith had procured the graceful dancer the rank and pay of a superior officer in the Turkish service. Besides his modest salary as a "fifth zephyr," he received 800 or 900 francs a month, and the subscribers of the Opéra never suspected they were applauding the twirls and pirouettes of a colonel in the Turkish army.

Tromelin's frankness, and the story of his exploits, attracted the notice of Napoleon, and the prisoner was given to understand that the Emperor liked brave men, and sought to attract them to his service. Many of these gentlemen, who had learned nothing but how to fight, envied the lot of the officers who followed "the Usurper"; but to enter the army was tantamount to submission, and that was not

<sup>1</sup> "This is what I learned from Sidney Smith and Phélippeaux, who was the principal actor in this scheme, which may be divided into two parts; the part played by Phélippeaux, and that taken by Sidney Smith. It was Sidney Smith who found the two men who brought the false order for his removal. *I never knew who they were—they were two obscure individuals.* It was Phélippeaux who waited in the carriage for Sidney Smith, and took him to Rouen, where they remained some days, and then crossed over into England. It was, I believe, Abbé Rathel (*sic*) of Rouen who concealed them. Sidney Smith embarked on a fishing-boat belonging to Havre. A Scotchman named Right, who had lived in Paris since his childhood, helped Sidney Smith. It was he who procured the order for the transfer. The Minister of Marine, being about to travel for some time, left some blank signed forms, one of which Right procured and gave to Phélippeaux."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4623. Tromelin's statement, Year XII.



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easy. Tromelin got out of the difficulty gallantly. "I owe to the Emperor, my country," he wrote, "and the happiness of living with my family. I regret that I have to offer my services from a prison, but were I free I could not more ardently express my loyalty." The Abbaye doors opened, and a year later Tromelin received his commission as captain.

In 1809 he was a colonel, staff-officer of the Grand Army in 1813, and, at Waterloo, General of a division which was the last to leave the battle-field.<sup>1</sup>

At the Restoration, this brave soldier, who had so often risked his life for the royal cause, was not looked upon at all favourably, and General Tromelin, Baron of the Empire, was put on the retired list. He did not return into favour till 1820, when he was appointed inspector of infantry. He died at his *château* at Coatserho, March 3rd, 1842. He was a grand officer of the Legion of Honour, and mayor of the village of Ploujean. He gave orders before his death that all his papers were to be destroyed, and specially requested that no funeral honours should be paid to his remains.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Service Notes of General de Tromelin, from the *Archives of the Ministry of War* :

"Tromelin (Jacques Jean Marie François Boudin, Comte de) born at Ploujean (Finistère), August 22nd, 1771; sub-lieutenant, Limousin regiment (42nd Infantry), January 10th, 1787; discharged March 17th, 1788; sub-lieutenant, October 1st, 1789; lieutenant in the 57th Infantry, September 15th, 1791; emigrated, and belonged to the corps of Comte Hector at Malmédi in 1792; quartermaster in Dresnay's corps at Jersey in 1793; exchanged into the corps of Prince de Léon in December, 1794; charged with a mission in December, 1795; prisoner in the Temple with Sidney Smith, April 10th, 1796. Left the Temple, July 8th, 1797. Sent on a mission in France, and afterwards in Egypt from 1798 to November 15th, 1801. State prisoner from April 15th, 1804, to July 25th same year; captain in the 112th regiment of the line, February 10th, 1806; on the staff of the army of Dalmatia, May 2nd, 1807; major, June 5th, 1809; colonel of 6th regiment of Croates, December 28th, 1809; staff officer of the 14th division of the 14th corps of the Grand Army, May 12th, 1813; adjutant commandant, August 1st, 1813; staff officer of the 13th division of the 7th corps, September 17th, 1813; General of brigade, November 19th, 1813; employed in the royal corps of Grenadiers, September 15th, 1814; in the 6th corps of the Northern army, May 6th, 1815; put on half-pay, August 1st, 1815; inspector of infantry, April 21st, 1820; Inspector General, June 23rd, 1824; Lieutenant-General, May 22nd, 1825; retired on half-pay, August 22nd, 1836; died at Morlaix, March 3rd, 1842. Grand officer of the Legion of Honour."

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of War.*

## GAMAIN

IN those remote times when Parisians still respected something—I mean before the upheaval of 1789—the Tuileries Palace was deemed an inviolate and august abode. Since those days, the mob has invaded the Palace so many times, and driven out and brought back so many Emperors and Kings, that it has gradually become familiar with the majesty of this tabernacle of monarchy—so much so, that one fine day it set on fire and knocked down the Palace, with the spiteful satisfaction of a child who breaks a toy it has long loved.

But in 1792 this species of amusement had not lost its novelty. There was a marvellous attraction about the great Palace, in which, for the last two years, so many plots against liberty had been hatched, and of which only a glimpse of the long, grey fronts and steep roofs could be caught from the Place du Carrousel. On every other side the mysterious castle was quite invisible, being hidden by the unbroken line of residences and convents in the Rue Saint-Honoré, or cut off by ditches, a turn-bridge, and inaccessible terraces which looked like bastions.

So, on the afternoon of August 10th, when royalty had fled, and the cannon had blown open the gates, and driven away their defenders, all Paris came to satisfy a wild curiosity, and see its conquest—a terrible spectacle which very few witnesses have cared to describe. In the great hall was a pool of mud and blood, scattered about by the footsteps of the sightseers. On the staircase were the bodies of Swiss soldiers, which the women stepped over laughingly, holding up their dresses. From the galleries on the first-floor came cries, songs from amidst the thick dust made by tearing up

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the carpets, and the noise of breaking glass—for every window was smashed with pikes or sticks. In quiet corners, people sat eating preserves and sweatmeats, by the side of dead bodies rolled in quilts; whilst an elegantly-dressed woman played dance music by pinching the strings of a piano which had lost its key-board. Some sprinkled themselves with lavender water; others undressed the corpses and grouped them in obscene or grotesque positions. A respectable looking young man scored a great success by drinking huge draughts of wine out of—a vessel not originally intended for that purpose. Through the maze of private apartments, a crowd circulated, passing quickly, in Indian file, from one room to another, aimlessly and anxiously poking into every corner and closet without stopping, exploring dark passages, walking haphazard over the broken glass which strewed the floor, climbing over the barricades of mattresses—of which there were enough to sleep an army—without laughing, shouting, or speaking, as though they were accomplishing a set task. Outside, the four wings of the Cour des Princes were burning fiercely, and a crowd of idlers had collected on the terrace round the naked corpses of the murdered Swiss, which were covered with a “pile of handkerchiefs,” and beneath a snowstorm of eider-down, “so thick that it darkened the daylight,” which came from the attics, where hundreds of feather-beds, bolsters, and pillows found in the Château were being torn to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

Until the evening of Sunday, the 12th, the crowd continued to come as though to a fair, but the principal attractions had disappeared. The bodies had been removed, the fires put out, the snowstorm of eider-down had come to an end, and on the Monday Paris thought no more of its conquest. Sentinels were placed at every door, and it was proposed to draw up an inventory of the furniture of the Palace and any papers that might be found.

The first occupant of the Palace after Louis XVI. was a former actor, named Boursault, who, as an elector of Paris and the friend of Collot d’Herbois, was appointed to verify the number of horses and carriages on the civil list. On

<sup>1</sup> *Le Nouveau Paris*, Mercier. Newspapers of the time, *passim*.

August 10th, Collot said, "Now the Faubourg Saint-Germain will empty, and we may each choose whatever residence we like." His friend Boursault belonged to the same school; he "chose" the Tuileries, and settled himself there without any false shame. This future millionaire was so poor that "all his belongings were carried in a basket on his back," and he could not find in the Carrousel quarter a baker who would give him credit for a four-pound loaf.<sup>1</sup> The second intruder was a poor devil, named Courtois, formerly a clog maker at Arcis-sur-Aube. He timidly asked for the loan of one of the Queen's pianos, "to teach his daughter music, and, as he was the friend of Danton, he obtained permission to take the instrument to his home. To steady it in the cart, he added several articles of furniture—which were found, twenty-three years later, at his Château de Rambluzin, in the Meuse.

On August 16th, Roland, the Minister of the Interior, decided that the Council should meet at the Palace. One of the rooms of the apartment of Mme. de Tourzel, on the ground-floor, on the courtyard, was made ready, and every morning the Ministers, Danton, Clavière, Monge, and Lebrun, met their colleague there, and lunched with him. They drank wine from the few cellars which had escaped pillage, deeming themselves authorised by the old custom which permitted "the notaries and scriveners of Paris to appropriate, when making an inventory, all the candles found in the house, and to drink the wine from the cellars as long as their operations lasted."

Their operations consisted in attesting that not a single bit of furniture remained intact, and that the people had destroyed everything that could be destroyed. The wildest rumours circulated amongst the public, the popular imagination fancying that such an old haunt of royalty as the Tuileries must be a terrible place, full of cells and *oubliettes*, and riddled with subterranean passages extending to Vincennes or Versailles. Groans were said to have been heard from under the flooring; a little dog had barked furiously

<sup>1</sup> *Le Château des Tuileries, ou récit de ce qui s'est passé . . . etc.* By P.J.A.R.D.E., 1802.

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at a certain panel. The walls were sounded, the floor pierced, but no one was found but one of the King's valets, who had hidden himself on the 10th in the chimney of the Queen's drawing-room, and having let down the trap could not raise it again. The poor man tried to climb up the chimney and escape by the roof, but fell back exhausted; the patrol found him dying of hunger. He offered to guide his liberators all over the palace, of which he declared he knew all the secrets, and obtained from Roland the post of janitor of the office of the committee of surveillance. His revelations were of slight importance; he showed that the four columns which formed the alcove of the Queen's bed were hollow and could each contain a person; and that all the corsets of Marie Antoinette were padded to conceal a slight deformity of her Majesty, who had one shoulder higher than the other; and he helped to find a casket, concealed under the cushion of a seat which "folded up into the woodwork of one of the windows."

One thing worried Roland. The Assembly had appointed a committee charged to collect and classify the papers of the royal family; and every day, before lunch, he went up to the first floor, and addressing the clerk, who was always alone at that hour, invariably put this same question:

"Have any of my letters to the King been found?"

To which the clerk as invariably replied:

"Not one."

"I am, however, sure they are here," the Minister would add.

He grumbled, rummaged, searched, tried to read what was pencilled on the bundles of papers, and he personally ransacked the Dauphin's room. In the chest of drawers were various scribblings which the child had neatly arranged, and the rough draft of this letter:

My dear papa,

I am very glad to be  
able to write to you to  
wish you a happy  
new year, and tell you  
I love you with all my  
heart.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Le Château des Tuileries, etc.*, by P.J.A.R.D.E.

This was not what Roland sought. Weeks passed, and his anxiety did not diminish. His long, miserable, scowling, cunning face was everlastingly to be encountered in the corridors of the Palace, and he was always found hovering about like a soul in pain, trying to hide his grey stockings and brown cloak behind doors, and shuffle along unheard in his thick boots. Marat, who was very lively at times, heard how Coco-Roland was worrying himself, and played an excellent joke on him. He revealed to the Committee of Researches, as a fact he knew for certain, that the evening before August 10th, the "Austrian woman" had thrown into one of the latrines some compromising letters and papers, and, the next day, Roland and his colleagues visited all the cesspools in the Palace. Two night-men, their noses covered with a cloth, and their eyebrows well rubbed with grease—such were the prophylactic precautions of that time—groped for the papers, and, when they found one, handed it up to Roland, who, armed with a pair of tongs, seized the precious fragment, and plunged it in a tub of vinegar. When the cesspool was empty, two men carried the tub into the committee-room. The Minister and his acolytes followed, gravely, each holding a handkerchief before his mouth, and watching closely to see that no important paper was conveyed away, and the terrible search began. At the end of six days, Marat, who had never laughed so heartily, solemnly declared that he had wanted "to amuse himself at the expense of his colleagues."

Evidence against the King was then being prepared, but slowly, for "materials for the accusation" were wanting, when one morning—it was November 20th—the clerks of the examining committee, on arriving at their office, saw Roland mounting the grand staircase with considerable agility. He was followed by a tall, thin, shabbily-dressed man with yellow complexion and sunken eyes, whom no one had ever before seen in the Palace. Both crossed the guards' ante-chamber and the council room, and entered the King's bedroom, where Roland locked himself in with his companion.

A little later the "yellow man" came out of the King's room, alone, and, as though he were quite familiar with

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the maze of corridors and staircases, went straight to the inspector of buildings, Heurtier, and asked him, on behalf of the Minister, for "a broom and a ball of string." At half-past eleven, he appeared again; Roland wanted two towels. The porter who took them saw the Minister on his knees on the floor, engaged in tying up "with an air of concentrated joy" two big bundles of papers. He was seen to come out, a minute later, still escorted by the unknown person, who carried under each arm a large bundle tied up in a towel. The sentinel at the gate having refused to let them pass, Roland sent for the superintendent, Dangleterre, stated who he was, and went his way.

It was not until a quarter-past two that he arrived at the riding-school where the Convention was sitting. The Assembly—presided over that day by Lepeletier—was dozing over the case of a person named Gerdret, accused of having furnished the troops with boots "with cardboard soles"—already! Roland's entrance made a sensation. He advanced to the tribune, and announced that he brought with him "several *cartons* filled with papers, which from their nature and the place in which they were found, seemed to be of great importance."

"These documents," he added, "were in so private and secret a place, that if the only person in Paris who knew of its existence had not shown it, it would have been impossible to have found it."

And, as a buzz of curiosity went round the benches, Roland, proud of his effect, clumsily added:

"Many of our colleagues who sat in the constitutive and legislative Assemblies will probably be compromised."<sup>1</sup>

There were ironical cries of "Ah! Ah!"; then a murmur of disapprobation followed and some surprise at this accusation so hastily brought against a part of the Convention. The same suspicion occurred to all minds: Had Roland taken the opportunity to examine the papers? Had he made away with any? Goupilleau insinuated that he ought, in the first place, to have communicated his discovery to the examining

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Archives*. National Convention, sitting of November 20th, 1792.

committee sitting at the Tuileries itself. Roland, evidently troubled, did not reply. The Left laughed, and immediately the ushers appeared bearing the papers, which they placed on the President's desk. It was then proposed to name a committee to examine them. But should those representatives who had formed part of preceding assemblies be excluded? Party spirit ran high, the discussion became long and stormy. Camille Desmoulins, however, restored calm with a few words.

"We shall never succeed," he said, "in appointing twelve members to examine these papers, when we do not think it strange that one man has examined them all alone before us."<sup>1</sup>

Roland was again silent; he was having a bad time. Whilst he was at the Assembly, the commissioners at the Tuileries discovered, to their astonishment, that he had, on his own authority, coolly broken the seals placed in the King's bedchamber. That room was lighted by a single window looking on to the garden; the bed was placed in an alcove formed on one side by a water-closet, and on the other by a short, wooden corridor leading to the Dauphin's room. It was in this corridor, which was six feet long by three feet wide, that the papers were hidden. A panel of the wood-work was taken away and disclosed an iron door, about a foot and a half square, closing a shapeless hole roughly hewn in the thickness of the wall.<sup>2</sup> The "yellow man" was the locksmith who had made the hiding-place; but for him the hiding-place would never have been discovered, and very probably the King would never have been tried, owing to want of evidence. It may be said that the information the locksmith that day gave Roland brought Louis XVI. to the block.

His name was François Gamain, and his history is a wretched one—a long, miserable struggle in a depraved heart between cowardice and fear. Gamain was a locksmith at Versailles: his father and his grandfather were both in

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Archives.*

<sup>2</sup> *Le Château des Tuileries*, by P.J.A.R.D.E.



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service at the Palace, and, before the Revolution, he used to go there every day. The King took a great liking to him, and, under his direction, tried to make locks in a little workshop, still existing, on the attic story overlooking the marble courtyard.<sup>1</sup>

Afterwards, when kept almost a prisoner at the Tuileries, and meditating flight, Louis XVI. wanted to put all his important papers in a safe place, and he trusted in his faithful Gamain. The valet, Durey, was sent to Versailles to fetch him, and he brought the locksmith into the Tuileries through the kitchens. The King himself cut the hole in the wall in three nights, whilst Durey picked up the chips and carried them to the river. All that remained to do was to close the cavity with an iron door, which Louis XVI. had forged in a little workshop, near his library, on the ground-floor of the Palace.

Gamain passed a whole day—it was May 22nd, 1791, Durey's evidence is exact on that point—in fixing the staples, hinges, and bolt socket in the masonry. As the corridor was very dark, the King held a candle, and Durey handed the tools. When the papers had been put in the hole and the door locked, the key was enclosed in a sealed casket, which was hidden under one of the flagstones at the end of the corridor.

The locksmith returned home to Versailles very late at night, and was immediately seized with fear. A month later, when he heard of the flight of the royal family, his terrors increased. If the hiding-place should, by chance, be found? If Durey should tell? If others knew the King's secret? Gamain was more dead than alive. On August 10th, knowing that the Palace was in the power of the mob, fright "turned his blood"; he could not eat, he left off work, and anxiously inquired if the Tuileries had been searched, and "if the Palace was to be pulled down." It is stated that ten times he came to Paris, determined "to tell everything," and returned without having seen anybody. When he learned that the King's trial was coming on, he at first thought of flight, but he had no money, and how was he to live if he left France? Then it was that he resolved to speak.

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des rues de Versailles*, by Le Roy.

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When he returned home after making his confession,<sup>1</sup> if his conscience was not at least his mind was at rest. He had "shown his patriotic zeal," and was appointed one of the commissioners charged "to remove from all the monuments in the commune, all paintings, sculptures, and inscriptions which might recall to mind royalty and despotism," which, at Versailles, was by no means a sinecure, we should imagine. When the King's trial came on he increased in favour; in January 1793 he was promoted to the position of municipal officer, and, at that time, might have been seen in the avenues of Versailles, bilious and gloomy, his gaunt figure encircled with a large tricoloured scarf. The poor man was half dead with fear. Every day he went from his old workshop in the Boulevard de la Liberté (late "du Roi") to the municipality, and perhaps there were people who, when they saw him pass, with a cockade in his cap, and a thick bludgeon in his hand, were frightened of him.

In September, the municipal body of Versailles, "taxed with lukewarmness," was dissolved. Gamain was henceforth amongst the "suspects," as a revoked functionary. Any *mouchard* could, if the fancy took him, send him to the scaffold, and, from that day, his life was one long torture.<sup>2</sup>

In the amazing drama of the Revolution, when everything of which the human soul is capable—heroism, abjectness, folly, or crime—was carried to excess, fear also played its part. It does not occupy a large space in the stories of the time, for—as somebody has said—one woman who cries makes more noise than twenty thousand men who are silent, and, as "noise" is precisely what history records, it has disdained to notice the silence, however tragic it may have been, of the immense body of tremblers whose immeasurable cowardice will therefore never be known. For that reason, the case of Gamain is valuable; it is the *épopée* of fear. The idea of the prison, the tribunal, the tumbrel, the scaffold haunted, terrified, and hypnotised him. He listened for the least noise in the street

<sup>1</sup> The original statement of Gamain about the iron door, in his handwriting, is in the National Library. Manuscript department, newly acquired French MSS., 6241.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire des rues de Versailles*, by Le Roy.

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or step on the stairs, everlastingly scenting danger. Had he not delayed too long from speaking? Might not the friendly feeling which Louis XVI. had shown towards him be brought against him?

If he were accused of having kept back his information, what excuse should he make? And this led him on to concoct a story which was abominable and inane. In the first place, he post-dated the making of the iron cupboard, fixing it at May 20th, 1792, though the event, as we know, took place a whole year earlier. Then he further fabricated a story that, on that day "when the work was finished; as it was very warm," Capet had poured him out, with his own royal hand, "a large glass of wine, enjoining him to drink it to the last drop." Gamain obeyed, thanked the King, bowed, and left the Tuileries, but had hardly started on his road home when he was taken with "atrocious pains in the bowels." He dragged himself, however, to Versailles, and in the night nearly died. Louis XVI. had poisoned him, to ensure his secrecy! The poison was of the best quality too, for, in spite of energetic measures, Gamain remained "paralysed in all his limbs for more than five months." He could not leave his "bed of pain," but as soon as he regained health "his first care" was to rush off to Roland and reveal to him the nature of the work on which the King had employed him. Such was the fable invented by Gamain, and it had two advantages. It not only explained the delay in making the denunciation, but gave his betrayal the colour of a very natural revenge. Capet poisons Gamain, and the locksmith sends the King to the scaffold—tit for tat.

We should form but a very poor idea of the credulity of Revolutionary times if we doubted the success of this story. The *conventionnel* Peyssard, formerly of the *garde du corps*, assisted by the ex-curé Musset, brought Gamain's romance to the notice of the Convention in May, 1794,<sup>1</sup> and, as we may well imagine, the memory of Louis XVI. was treated that day as it deserved! Louis XVI.! "That monster whose name comprises every crime, that prodigy of

<sup>1</sup> See the text of the report in the *Histoire des rues de Versailles*, by A. Le Roy, vol. i., p. 56 *et seq.*

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wickedness and perfidy," was painted to the horror-stricken Assembly as "calmly presenting a glass of poisoned wine to the father of a family whom he assassinates with an air of interest and kindness." "Terrible beings!" cried the orator in conclusion, "you who would thus reward those who serve you, what would you not do to other men?"

The affair ended by the vote of a decree of which this is the tenour—"François Gamain, poisoned by Louis Capet May 22nd, 1792, old style, shall enjoy an annual pension for life of the sum of 1,200 livres, to count from the day of the poisoning."

Since then the story has grown; every twenty-five years we see it reappear, embellished with some fresh details. Bibliophile Jacob, in a little book courageously entitled *Évocation d'un fait ténébreux de la Révolution française*, has graced it with all the powers of his imagination. We find in his narrative a rich, mysterious Englishman, who picks up Gamain, twisting about in agony, on the road between Paris and Versailles. There is also a dog, which dies two hours after eating the rest of the poisoned bun which Marie Antoinette had given the workman—for here the assassin is no longer the King, but the Queen—and the glass of wine, to make matters more certain, is accompanied by a cake. Then follow the various phases of the paralysis which afflicted Gamain for five months.

These absurd pages have found credulous readers. Some people have searched the archives for the documents from which the bibliophile took his information, and, as they did not find them, have come to the conclusion that "the papers concerning the affair were destroyed at the time of the Restoration"—a supposition which is very consoling to the disappointed searchers. The truth is that Gamain was neither poisoned nor paralysed. Even admitting as correct the date of May 22nd, 1792, which he gives as that of his interview with Louis XVI., his assertions fall to the ground. On June 4th—twelve days later—he was, in fact, present at the sitting of the general council of the Commune, of which he was a member, and his name is found on the minutes of the proceedings. It occurs again on July 8th, 17th, and 20th,

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and also on August 22nd, and this assiduity contradicts his sad story. But legends die hard, and that of Gamain is so dramatic. Paul Lacroix, recording the recollections of "well-informed witnesses," wrote :

"Old inhabitants of Versailles remember with pity a man they used to see walking alone, and leaning on a stick like an old man, in the deserted alleys of the park, and gazing at the Palace, now deprived of its hereditary kings. Gamain was but fifty-eight years of age at the time of his death, but showed every sign of decrepitude. Nearly all his hair had fallen off, and what little he had left hung white across a forehead furrowed with deep wrinkles. His pale cheeks were sunken, owing to the absence of teeth, and his eyes were dull and sad, though they glowed with a mournful light at the name of Louis XVI., of whom he always spoke with bitterness, sometimes with tears. The stoop in his figure, which had formerly been tall and upright, the total loss of strength, and the incessant lassitude he felt, were due, the medical men declared, to an incurable disorder of the stomach and intestines. Gamain lived a very retired life with his family, contenting himself with the small pension he received until his death, despite the successive variations of Government. His pension was never suppressed—for fear, no doubt, of recalling the sad cause for which it had been granted."

The picture is almost heart-breaking, but the death-register of Versailles bears witness that Gamain died at the age of forty-four, not fifty-eight, and he assisted at no variations of Government, seeing that his death is dated 19 Florial, Year III. (May 8, 1795), only a year after the pension had been granted him. He saw the reaction coming; his terrors began anew; it might almost be said that he died of fright.

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*[The reader may, perhaps, be astonished to find in juxtaposition the names of two women whose places in the world were so very different. They have not been brought together here for the purpose of pointing out any similarity between them, or for the sake of the contrast between two characters so widely dissimilar. We know too little about the past life of the dead, their secret sorrows, their struggles and their intentions, to be able to judge them; and it would seem that if we must give a preference to any of these poor departed spirits, it should be given, not perhaps to those venerated and saintly women, who, with their eyes turned towards heaven, passed through life knowing nothing of its deceptions and defilements, but to those who lamentably failed to bear the burden of human passions and human sufferings.]*

Nor was there any intention of assigning a greater importance to one or other of the two women whose history is here given. If they meet in these pages it is simply because they entered life by the same gate, for some time followed the same road, both were plighted to lead the calmest and most sedate lives, and both were the playthings of a stormy destiny. The one,—headstrong in her religious faith,—defied revolutionary laws, braved the guillotine and seemed to seek death, which, however, spared her for nearly a century. The other, renouncing the past, associating herself with the victors, bearing the name of one of them, seemed to have in her favour every chance of escaping the storm, and yet perished on the scaffold amidst the jeers of a pitiless mob. These two histories, so dissimilar in character, have yet one moral in common:—the

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*ironic impassibility of fate, and the foolishness of making efforts to ameliorate or change it.]*

## I

### THE STORY OF A CARMELITE NUN<sup>1</sup>.

IN the last days of his reign, Louis Philippe delighted to recall the memories of his chequered career. He had seen many people and things since the day when, twelve years of age, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had acted as his sponsors at his baptism, and he had then been handed over to his hot-tempered "governor"—Mme. de Genlis. He was the last of the Versailles circle, and when, amidst his family at Neuilly—seated in his big arm-chair, his head covered with a black, silk cap, and dressed in a long, bottle-green frock coat—he spoke, not without melancholy, of his youth, it seemed to his respectful hearers some historic and semi-mythical story, so far away did revolutions and changes in manners make it appear.

It was thus that one day he related having seen, in company with his sister Adélaïde, a novice take the veil at the Carmelite Church in the Rue de Grenelle on July 24th, 1784.

She belonged to one of the first families in the kingdom, for she was the daughter of Charles Joachim de Seiglières de Belleforières, Count of Soyecourt and Tuppigny, Marquis of Guerbigny, Baron d'Itre, lord of Grandes-Tournelles, Montdidier, Séricourt, Grand-Manoir-de-Lihons, Champignolles, and twenty other places. The poor father, however, in spite of all his titles, had not the strength of mind to be present—it was said he was ill of grief,—and it was whispered, also that the young postulant had fled from her father's residence to escape the scoldings of her relatives, who were all opposed to her taking the vow. This increased the

<sup>1</sup> Sources: *Vie de Mme. de Soyecourt, Carmélite*; and *Notice sur le Monastère dit de Grenelle. Histoire du tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris*, by Wallon. *Le Couvent des Carmes pendant le Terreur*, by A. Sorel. National Archives, W. 431. *Archives of the Prefecture of Police*.



CAMILLE DE SOYECOURT.

*(From a print in the Cabinet des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale.)*





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interest of the ceremony, which was very fashionably attended, and the church was crowded with a congregation as illustrious as it was irreligious. Opera glasses were passed to examine the heroine, Camille de Soyecourt, who, in full Court costume, with paniers, furbelows, coifs, lace, and roses, knelt before Monseigneur de Juigné, the Archbishop of Paris, who sat with his back to the altar, surrounded by bishops in violet robes, and canons each in full ecclesiastical costume down to the squirrel-skin bag on the arm. The novice herself was so "overcome," in spite of her rouge, that she seemed weighed down by her petticoats, which were four and a-half ells long, according to etiquette. President Molé, and the Marquis de Feuquières, her sponsors, accompanied her to the chancel, and the Jesuit-father, Le Guay, delivered the "sermon of investiture," which was hardly heard on account of the fluttering of fans, the hum of conversation, and the sobs of Mme. de Soyecourt, who had not dared to absent herself out of consideration to the Archbishop. It was the general opinion, however, that the frail and weak Camille de Soyecourt would not be able to stand the hard fare of the Carmelites for more than six months, and that she might as well commit suicide as take the veil. In short, the ceremony was a nine days' wonder in the fashionable world; the young pupil of Mme. de Genlis was so much impressed that the incident remained fixed in the memory of the old King sixty years later; he liked to recall this old memento of bygone times and manners, of which he deemed himself one of the very few surviving witnesses.

Someone present that evening asked him what became of the poor girl, and Louis Philippe replied that he did not know, but that she had probably succumbed to the austerities of conventual life, unless the Revolution had—— But as this remark cast a gloom over the company, he changed the subject.

A few days later one of the ladies of the Court, who had heard the story, chanced to visit the Archbishop, and mentioned the incident to Mgr. Affre, who, well-informed on the subject, was able to finish the story.

"You may inform his Majesty," he said, "that Sister

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Camille still lives. She has buried all her family and all her convent, and never ceased, even in the worst days of the Terror, from strictly following the rules of her Order. The most cruel griefs, the most unforeseen calamities, the most savage persecutions have had no effect on her—she was obstinately determined to live through them all. She is now ninety years old ; she is bled four times a year ; eats nothing but vegetables boiled in water, and has the good spirits of a girl of sixteen who looks forward to all the pleasures of life. The King ought to honour her with a visit.”

Louis Philippe promised not to fail to do so, but three months later the Revolution turned him out of Paris before he had time to visit Sister Camille. But she survived that fresh cataclysm with the serenity and indifference she displayed towards all the incidents of material existence. Like the worthy bishop mentioned by Victor Hugo, this holy woman “ had deserved to have no political opinion.”

Yet she had suffered a good deal from Revolutions in the course of her life. On the evening of September 2nd, 1792, after matins—she had then been a nun eight years—she saw from the window of her cell five men climb over the wall which bordered the Rue de Bourgogne, enter the convent garden, and hide amongst the shrubberies. The alarm was given, and the gardener ran off to inform the police of the section, but the only comfort he brought back was the news of the slaughter which had taken place in the prisons that day. The Carmelites slept in their clothes that night for fear of surprise, and the next day the Prioress provided them with secular garments.

Ten days later two commissaries of the Commune knocked at the door and entered the convent ; a crowd followed them, eager to penetrate this abode of mystery and discover the secret of the barred windows, behind which—according to popular opinion—so many innocent victims groaned. They only “ exhumed ” thirty-one nuns, the oldest of whom was eighty years of age, and who all waited patiently till the search was completed. At the end of the day, after having sounded the floors, inspected the cellars, tapped the walls, and

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broken some of the reliquaries, the commissaries informed them they must leave at once. The poor women embraced each other tenderly, passed through the joking but rather disappointed crowd, reached the door, and went off in little groups in different directions, somewhat troubled, no doubt, to find themselves wandering at that time of the night in that tragic city, of which not one of them knew the streets.

Their adventures would fill a big book. The dispersion of the religious communities had been foreseen, and secret refuges provided. That same evening eight of the nuns were so well hidden that they escaped all search. Another group composed of seven nuns, the "president" of which was Sister Louise Thérèse (Mlle. Jeanne Louise Colin de la Biochaie), took refuge in a house in the Rue Cassette. In the "justificatory documents" of M. Campardon's book on the "Revolutionary Tribunal" may be read the edifying and dramatic story of these holy women whose simple courage disarmed even the accomplices of Fouquier-Tinville. Their appearance before the tribunal was the occasion of an incident that is unique in the revolutionary chronicles. In answering the President, one of the accused, who for twenty-five years had never spoken to a man except her confessor, replied thoughtlessly, "*Non, mon père!*" There was a roar of laughter throughout the court; Dumas himself, and Souberbielle, and the locksmith-juryman Didier, and the vindictive Sempronius-Villate-Gracchus, and Naudin, the public accuser, and the gendarmes, and the prisoners themselves, and all the spectators could not refrain from laughing heartily; and perhaps it was owing to this that the unfortunate women were only condemned to transportation.

On leaving the convent in the Rue de Grenelle, the little colony of which Sister Camille de Soyecourt was the directress crossed the city and took refuge in the Rue Mouffetard in a house that had been hired beforehand, situated between a courtyard and a garden, and without any inconvenient neighbours. There they lived peaceably; one of the rooms was converted into a chapel, and there they chanted their prayers as they used to do at the convent, and two priests came to perform Mass and preach to them. At that time there were

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plenty of refractory priests in Paris in the most unexpected disguises. One of them pretended to be a drawing-master, and carried a pyx about with him in a colour-box.

Sister Camille and her five companions had therefore all the spiritual aid they required, and deemed themselves happy. But one day a patriot who lived near thought these women suspicious, and denounced them to the section. On the morrow—it was Good Friday—whilst the nuns were chanting matins, they heard a loud knocking at the door. They opened it, and some thirty *sectionnaires*, armed with pikes, invaded the house. They visited every room and, report states, “found no food in the refectory but some bread on a folded napkin and a pitcher of water. There was no sign that a fire had been lighted that day.” The commissaries, however, placed seals on a cupboard full of papers—correspondence between Mlle. de Soyecourt, her superiors, and the refractory priests hidden in Paris. The next day the little community—with the exception of two of the sisters who had been seized with fright and fled in the night—were arrested. Sister Camille was imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie, where she collected round her other nuns, prisoners like herself, and they read prayers together every day. She met there a priest, who came to the prison once a week disguised as a wine-seller’s porter, carrying a basket of bottles on his head. He fraternised with the gaolers, gave them drink, ranted and blustered, went all over the prison, sold his wine, consoled the prisoners, heard confessions, was entrusted with letters from the prisoners to their friends outside, and came away smoking his pipe and carrying the empty bottles. His name was Abbé de Lalande, and he afterwards became Bishop of Rodez.

Sister Camille was taken to prison on Easter Sunday and released on Whit Monday. She had nowhere to go, and, much against her will, was obliged to return to the Hôtel de Soyecourt, where she lived several months with her parents. But on February 12th, 1794, M. and Mme. de Soyecourt were in their turn arrested; the count was locked up in the Carmelite convent, now transformed into a prison, and his wife was taken to Sainte-Pélagie; the same day their two daughters, Mme. de la Tour and Mme. d’Hinnisdal,

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were also imprisoned. Left alone in the deserted house, Sister Camille fled that night. All the money she had was a crown piece, worth six francs, and, in her ignorance of material affairs, she imagined that "by spending a halfpenny a day on food, she had enough to keep herself for four months." She soon found she was wrong in her financial calculations. She lived in a garret that a pious person had lent her, and went out early every morning to "find a Mass" and to buy "her provisions." One day, hearing the cry of a milkman in the street, she came down with a little cup to get some milk. When she put her arm through the bars of the cart, the milkman—a big fat man who loved to laugh—noticed the white hands of his customer and her aristocratic bearing, and said, by way of a joke ;

"Hallo, little *ci-devant* ! Have they forgotten to cut you short ?"

Seized with fear, Camille fled with her empty cup and that day ate nothing. She had not the least idea of cooking ; she boiled herrings and thought she had taken food when she had swallowed a bowl of the water ;—the fish were kept for *fête* days. When greatly pressed by hunger, Mlle. de Soyecourt would go by night to the Rue de Verneuil, slip secretly into her father's splendid hôtel—which had been left in charge of a solitary manservant—and take some eggs, which she ate raw. Coming there one evening in March, she heard that her mother had died of dysentery at Sainte-Pélagie, and been buried the same day in the common grave.

In the spring, when the Terror was at its height, she left the city in obedience to the decree ordering all ex-nobles to quit Paris. But not wishing to be far away from the prisons in which her father and her sisters were confined, she stopped at Moulineaux, where she lived six months working on a farm, never failing to keep her fasts and meagre day, and sedulously reciting her prayers at the conventual hours. Every week she went on foot to Paris to confess, according to the Carmelite rules, but as she risked, not only her own life, but that of the priest she was going to see, she took some precautions, and changed her clothes behind a wall on the plain of Grenelle. She passed the city gate, dressed in white, with a

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large republican cockade in her cap, and having under her arm a little package containing the clothes she had taken off, and which she put on again at the same place when she was returning to Moulineaux. About that same time the Papal Nuncio was living like a Robinson Crusoe in the copses of the Bois de Boulogne, carrying on his back a small furnace in which he cooked, in the open air, what herbs and vegetables he could procure.

Passing one day down the Rue de Vaugirard, Camille heard a news-hawker cry, "Condemnation of the *ci-devant* Soyecourt." She went at once to the Carmelite convent. Nothing was changed in the appearance of the prison, but she learned that the previous evening the tumbrils had taken a great number of prisoners to the Revolutionary tribunal. Three days later Mme. d'Hinnisdal, at the age of thirty-five, was put to death. The proceedings in her case were so hasty, that on the list given to the judges her name is spelled "Catherine Saucourt, widow of Denis d'Hale." Her little boy, left to himself, passed the greater part of his time at the prison-gates hoping "to see his mother come out." The poor woman did at last come out, and from the cart which took her to the tribunal could see her son pushed back by the soldiers, following at a distance "the bier of the living" till it disappeared beneath the gloomy arcade of the Conciergerie. Sister Camille took care of the orphan and acted as his mother as long as he lived, and, in spite of her own poverty, grief, and weak health—she suffered from heart disease, and the doctors said she could not live long—wished to be the guardian of her nephew.

Being obliged to leave the farm where she had taken refuge—for the death of her parents had made her identity known—Mlle. de Soyecourt found herself without food or shelter, and in the most terrible distress. She was obliged to beg for aid from the municipality, which, according to the custom in those days, lodged her, as a vagabond, in an empty house. The moment Sister Camille had a roof over her head, she thought of reconstituting the Carmelite Order. She discovered a lay sister of her convent, who, by working as a domestic servant, had amassed ten louis in the course of two years—quite a

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treasure! This lay sister was named Sister Catherine. Mlle. de Soyecourt brought her to live with her, and the two of them arranged, in the house which the surly municipality of Issy had granted them, a little chapel, to which soon came the refractory priests, who lodged in the neighbouring quarries and woods, to say Mass.

The Terror, however, came to an end, and on October 15th, 1794, Sister Camille obtained permission to return to Paris. She lodged in the Rue des Postes, near the former seminary of the Holy Ghost. It was in the pretty chapel of this establishment that the first Mass was celebrated. Camille had procured the keys, had appropriated and decorated the devastated chancel, and though there was neither singing nor bells, the benediction was given there to the inhabitants of the quarter, who came in crowds, joyful to find religious services renewed.

At this period, Mlle. de Soyecourt is described as being "tall, pale, thin, and calm"; never seeming busy or excited, in spite of the immense work she had undertaken. Dressed in a gown of black wool, with a white cap on her head, she visited the notaries and lawyers, and obtained for herself and her nieces the restitution of nearly the whole of the immense fortune of her parents. Lawyers' clerks, who did not know who she was, were amazed to hear this shabbily-dressed woman with a basket under her arm talk of millions, and selling estates, and buying property at a time when the richest people were without necessities. After living six months at the Rue des Postes, Sister Camille bought, in the Rue Saint-Jacques, a large house with the sign of the "Black Cow." She called to her all the nuns who had been dispersed, who came—for the most part worn out with troubles and poverty—to take refuge with her. But that was only a temporary home. In the course of her expeditions about Paris, she had visited the former convent of the Carmelites, where her father and so many other victims of the revolutionary scaffold had been imprisoned. This tragic spot, connected with so many recollections of the September massacres, was in great part unoccupied. A contractor for public *fêtes* had,



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however, set up a "Bal des marronniers" there, and the cloister was let to a wood merchant. Mlle. de Soyecourt bought the church, the convent buildings, and their magnificent gardens, and sent in a whole army of workmen, for nothing was left of the old monastery but the stones. The snow fell in the interior of the house as though it were an open street, and had to be swept out, and—except one wall which still bore traces of bullets and the blood of the September murders—every boundary had disappeared.

On August 24th, 1797, Mlle. de Soyecourt and her companions took possession of their new retreat. She reserved nothing for herself but a narrow cell which appealed to her sense of filial piety, for it was in this little room that her father was imprisoned for five months, and from there that he was taken to the scaffold.

Mother Camille lived there for forty-five years; not altogether without troubles, for she was fated to have worries; but they never seemed to touch her, and her good humour only increased. One of these incidents, however, deserves to be recorded.

In January 1811 the police learned from a letter opened by "the black cabinet," and addressed to Mgr. de Gregorio, one of the prelates suspected by the Imperial Government, that a certain "Dame Camilla," living in the Carmelite convent, occupied herself busily in copying and distributing the bull of excommunication *Quum memoranda*, launched against the Emperor. Two policemen came to the convent and arrested "Dame Camilla." At the Prefecture of Police, where they kept her prisoner, there was—as soon as the incident was noised abroad—a procession of all the royalists in Paris, who came to pay a visit to Mlle. de Soyecourt by way of protest. Soon it became a fashionable amusement, and not only the prisoner's cell but the corridor leading to it was filled all day with an aristocratic crowd. All down the Rue de Jérusalem and the Quai des Orfèvres there was a row of blazoned carriages. The prisoner was then locked up in strict seclusion, and afterwards exiled to Guise. She lodged there with the hospital sisters, and immediately the visits and the marks of respect recommenced, causing great

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anxiety to the Prefect of the Department. The Empire was much alarmed about this one weak woman, whom they knew to be inflexible; the police kept watch on the Carmelite convent, to which it was stated she sometimes came in disguise from Guise. As a matter of fact, Mlle. de Soyecourt would not desert her beloved community; she visited it secretly, coming part of the way on foot, and impudently passed under the very noses of the policemen, wearing a cotton blue-check skirt, and mischievously counterfeiting a limp as well.

The Restoration put an end to her exile, and perhaps after that she might have lived quietly, if the administration of the diocese had not taken into its head the idea that the vast convent of the Carmelites was excellently suited for the establishment of an ecclesiastical school. Mother Camille long refused to make this sacrifice, but at last gave way, and, to lodge the sisters, acquired an old Bernardine convent, situated in the Rue de Vaugirard. There she passed the last years of her long life. When her troubles came to an end, her physical sufferings began. Her body was so thin that it was almost transparent, and revenged itself for the hard *régime* she had made it undergo. At eighty-five years of age she still lay on a board, in spite of the gout which tortured her limbs, and violent pains in the stomach which would not let her sleep. When the sisters came in the morning to know how she had passed the night they found their mother seated on her rush chair.

"My poor children," she said gaily, "I thought this time I was really gone."

That was her usual expression. She loved to talk, and often hummed in her cracked voice—like many old people of those days—songs she improvised :

La vieillesse me gêne  
J'ai quatre-vingt dix ans ;  
Je conserve ma tête  
Malgré mes maux cuisants.

Another fragment which has been remembered is this couplet, copied from an air in the "Wandering Jew" :

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Dans ma longue carrière  
J'ai eu bien des tourments.  
J'ai vu dessus la terre  
Des bons et des méchants ;  
Chacun meurt à son tour,  
Et moi, je vis toujours.

At other times, after trying a few trills, she would say, quite seriously :

"My voice is not very good to-day ; I will wait till to-morrow."

She was deaf, and nearly blind : her stomach refused food, and generally she took nothing but a little milk and a bunch of grapes—and went without that on fast days. Her limbs were paralysed, and, in addition, she always suffered from the heart complaint which the doctors had declared, when she was only seventeen, would speedily kill her. Her body was so wasted away that it was "merely a pretext for keeping a soul on earth." She died at the age of ninety-two, May 9th, 1849. The corpse, draped in the coarse serge Carmelite robe, was shown behind the chancel grating, the curtain being raised so as to allow the public to catch a glimpse dimly, through the wire lattice, of the rigid face, crowned with white roses.

Mlle. de Soyecourt was buried in the vaults of the convent of the Carmelites, and it was on seeing her tombstone in that dark crypt covered with the bones of the victims of September, that I was seized with a curiosity to learn the story of the life of this good woman, whose name history has not recorded, but to whom we owe the preservation of the Carmelite convent, which is certainly one of the most moving and most picturesque buildings of old Paris.

## II

### MÈRE DUCHESNE

CERTAIN philanthropists, though they profess to pity the poorer classes, take care not to deprive themselves of those luxuries which the lower orders never enjoy ; and it is

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considered now quite possible to be comfortably off, and yet encourage others to revolt against the uneven distribution of the world's goods. In former days, the judgment of the people was more sweeping, and they distrusted communists with titles, and socialists in silk stockings. The gossips of those times could not believe that a millionaire like Baron de Cloots sincerely believed that society was out of order, nor take very seriously the Jacobin orations of his Serene Highness Charles Constantine, Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Rheinfels-Rothembourg, afterwards "Citizen Hesse." In those days, they saw things "in the lump," and there needed to be a certain harmony between theory and practice; and that is why the Parisians of 1793 unanimously imagined Hébert—Père Duchesne—as belonging to the lowest class of society, a boon companion, reeking of tobacco and spirits, swearing, grumbling, and talking the slang of the Faubourg Marceau. He understood so well that he owed the greater part of his celebrity to this legend, that he ornamented the top of his journal with a block showing a sort of Colossus, dressed in a carmagnole jacket, with two pistols at his belt, a sabre by his side, and brandishing an axe over the head of a coxcombical abbé prostrated at his feet. Everybody thought that was an authentic portrait of Hébert himself, and there was certainly a good deal of disappointment in the rage which stirred the populace, when he passed through the streets on the headsman's cart, on seeing this little *ci-devant* with puny limbs, pale complexion, small hands, and so weak that he had to lean against his neighbour in the tumbril. Paris had a feeling that it had been mystified. Never had a victim been hooted at with so much rage; never had the fall of the knife been so much cheered.

Hébert was, however, almost a plebeian; the son of small merchants of Alençon, and having lost his father when he was eleven years of age, he was brought up by the Jesuit fathers in a manner far superior to his condition. Condemned to banishment for having insulted the local magistrates, and obliged to quit his native town, he had left his mother and sisters in poverty, and was terribly hard up himself. Those philosophers who bother their heads to find out

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the causes of the Revolution are too apt to overlook this one ;—the number of energetic fortune-seekers, who, by the generosity of some rich godfather, or by obtaining some scholarship, had been brought up “in a college of science and pride,” who were no good in their own little town, but felt



HÉBERT (PÈRE DUCHESNE).

From a sketch by Gabriel in the Musée Carnavalet.

themselves ready to do anything and found nothing to do, and so came to Paris, where they picked up a chance living. When the old world first began to crack, they exerted themselves so well with elbows and lungs, pushing so hard and crying so loud, that they were quickly in the front places. These rascals knew Juvenal by heart, and recited Tacitus better than their “Pater,” and came furnished with

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plenty of talent to expend, and provided with an inexhaustible supply of classical diatribes, against tyrants.

Hébert was one of those needy wretches to whom fate owes a revenge, and he carved himself out a grand one. He was always silent about his years of misery. "I have lived," he said laconically, "at the hotel of Frugality."<sup>1</sup> All that we know on the subject is from a few confidences addressed to his mother, and some avowals that he let out in the course of his defence at the Tribunal. He left Alençon in 1780, without a crown in his pocket, and went to Rouen, where he could not earn a living. A chance was offered of a post in China, but the affair fell through. He came to Paris, and that was worse still; for six years "he suffered hunger and cold." He lodged in a den in one of those old streets which bordered the Lisieux College, and the Carmelite convent in the Place Maubert, and had found one of his old Alençon comrades, Desgenettes, who studied medicine. Desgenettes took pity on his compatriot, and sometimes stood him a lunch at one of the eating-houses in the Rue de la Parcheminerie or the Rue de Mâcon.<sup>2</sup> Poor Hébert was also pitied by the hairdresser, Parisot, of the Rue des Noyers, and, as he was a good-looking fellow, he was also favourably noticed by two charming neighbours, the daughters of the pork-butcher, whose shop was situated opposite the Rue Saint-Jean de Beauvais. His friend, Desgenettes, was also liked by a somewhat elderly, but still coquettish dame, who kept a tobacco-shop in the Rue des Anglais, and a boarding-house for students in a house of five stories that had belonged to the father of J. B. Rousseau, and upon which was this inscription:

" C'est ici que naquit Rousseau  
De son siècle le flambeau."

Amidst these tortuous streets of the Latin Quarter, Hébert led the life of one of those poor devils who tramp the streets, go to bed with an empty stomach, wake without knowing where they will eat, pass the whole day in hunting for a half-crown, and are always shabby, ragged, and down-at-heel.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Société historique du Cher*, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs de la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ou Mémoires de R.D.G.*

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Never was he so much of a *sans-culotte*. The possession of a louis would have been a fortune to him, and he had begged his cousin, Hérembert, to advance him that sum. "I have used," he wrote to his mother, who was quite as destitute as he was, "I have used all sorts of pretexts to persuade him to give it me. I first declared that I wanted to be received as an advocate; then that I was very ill, and needed the money. He did not reply to me. I had great need of it, for I owe three months' rent and do not make enough to live on."<sup>1</sup>

Almost at the same time, Camille Desmoulins uttered this cry of distress to his father, "For pity's sake help me; send me six louis or a bed!" Later on, when Camille and Hébert were quarrelling, they taunted each other with their past poverty, and we learn then what were those callings which did not bring Hébert "enough to live on." Firstly, "a poor frater bleeding people for sixpence," then box-keeper at the booth of the *Variétés amusantes* at the Palais Royal, where "he opened the box-doors to *ci-devants*, bowing to the ground." The *Calendrier des petits spectacles* of 1786 and 1787 mentions him as engaged in this humble employment. Five years later his name figured in the National Almanac as deputy *procureur* of the Commune of Paris.

As soon as the Bastille was thrown down, a number of people whom the old State prison had formerly frightened, took advantage of their impunity and became improvised pamphleteers. A thousand poor devils of talent, Bohemians of the street or pot-house orators, gained a few louis by spitting their bile, and there was a glut in the market. These productions—the titles of which are sometimes catching—encumber revolutionary bibliographies, and are horribly dull reading. There were wholesale agents in the trade in those days. A certain widow Dubois, who combined the three professions of printer, publisher, and bookseller, started a pamphlet factory and employed Hébert, who began with the *Petit Carême de l'Abbé Maury*, in ten numbers. The profession was not a noble one, but it was at least lucrative, and the new author, who had been reduced to pawning shirts he had

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Société Historique du Cler*, 1858.

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borrowed from his friends,<sup>1</sup> knew at last the luxury of seven-penny dinners and the quietude of a garret free from bailiffs.

As soon as he could satisfy his hunger and dress decently, the Bohemian became a respectable citizen. All these adventurers had received from their worthy ancestors an innate taste for family life, the need of a home, a liking for the family dinner and household pleasures. It would be venturesome to peer retrospectively into their private life. We feel a tender indulgence towards them—they are so placid, amiable, sensitive, and full of kindness. A man who can with a word cause ten heads to fall, and whose name startled Europe pronounces with horror, is at home a tender husband who plays the flute, rears canaries, and lushes his children to sleep with a lullaby. Hébert also confined his ambition to these things; though his years of apprenticeship had been so hard, he did not dream for an instant, as soon as he was free from poverty, of enjoying Paris, from which he had never received anything but sorrows and vexations. The fierce revolutionist aspired to a domestic life, and married.

In the Rue Saint-Honoré formerly stood the monastery of the Conception, the door of which was almost at the corner of the Rue du Luxembourg (now Rue Cambon) and the gardens of which, planted with shrubberies, extended to the Boulevard. In consideration of the sum of five to six hundred livres, candles and wood not included, the Dames de la Conception received boarding pupils. The daughters of the carpenter Duplay, who occupied a house near by belonging to the convent, were educated there. The community consisted, in 1790, of twenty-four nuns and eight lay sisters.<sup>2</sup> Their costume was a white robe, a long white scapulary

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4438. Proceedings at Hébert's trial. Evidence of Mme. Dubois, printer. "In January 1790 Hébert was in a state of poverty, and asked help from a friend, who took him in; he disappeared, taking with him mattress, shirts, collars, &c. He pawned them all, but being afterwards met by the person he had robbed, he made his excuses, and handed over the pawn-tickets. Hébert denies the mattress, but owns to having disposed of his friend's shirts on leaving the lodging."

<sup>2</sup> List of the nuns and lay sisters composing the community of the Conception, Rue Saint-Honoré, certified by Sister Geneviève Wattebled, superior.—*National Archives*, F<sup>10</sup>, 863.



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reaching to the feet, an under-garment, and a black veil. At grand ceremonies they wore on their shoulders a large sky-blue mantle fastened with a silver medal bearing the figure of the Virgin.<sup>1</sup> The cells were uniformly furnished with a chest of drawers, two chairs, a crucifix, a religious picture, and a bed "with a canopy of grey serge for the winter, and white cotton for the summer."<sup>2</sup>

When, in the month of June 1790 the municipal commissaries presented themselves at the Conception to ask the nuns "whether it was their intention to remain in the house or leave it," twenty-three declared that, faithful to their vows, they desired to live and die as nuns: one alone declared "that she could not at present make up her mind."<sup>3</sup> This nun was named Marie Marguerite Françoise Goupil. She was born at Paris early in 1756, and consequently was nearly thirty-five years old. She had never left the Conception, where she had been educated. Her mother, *née* Louise Morel, as well as her father, Jacques Goupil, linen-draper, had both been dead many years.<sup>4</sup>

Sister Marie Françoise's name does not appear on the list of the community drawn up a year later, July 1st, 1791, by order of the municipality. She had, in the interval, left the convent, either because she had made up her mind to return to the world, or because "her sisters," scandalised at her

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques*, by Father Hélot.

<sup>2</sup> Report of description and inventory of furniture and property of the monastery of the Conception. Statements of the nuns.—*National Archives*, S. 4672.

<sup>3</sup> Statements of the inmates of the Conception as to their intention to remain in the house or leave it, annexed to our report of this day, June 23rd, 1790.—*National Archives*, S. 4672.

<sup>4</sup> Marie Louise Morel, wife of Goupil, had succeeded her husband in the little drapery business he had established, and which does not appear to have enriched him. Widow Goupil, in the last years of her life, was sick nurse to Abbé Vazelaire, appointed priest of the parish of Saint-Paul, with whom she resided some time, and removed her modest furniture to his house. Was it this Abbé who helped Marguerite Françoise to enter the monastery of the Conception? Mme. Goupil, when dying, was carried to the hospital sisters of the Place Royale, where she died, July 16th, 1791. At that time Marguerite Françoise was not yet a nun. We find that on August 6th of that year she gave a power of attorney to Sieur Vauclat, citizen of Paris, Rue du Petit Pont, to look after her interests and settle all matters connected with her mother's property. She then lived in the Rue de Bourgogne.—*Papers of M. Albert Morel*, 51, Rue Polignac, Paris.

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hesitation, had requested her to withdraw. Françoise therefore found herself, at the age of thirty-six, alone in the world, of which she knew nothing, and where a great misfortune awaited her. Hébert fell in love with her and married her.

He had met her at the "Fraternal Society of both sexes," the members of which—men, women, and boys of all ages—asssembled the Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday of each week, in a low room in the convent of the Jacobins, next door to the celebrated club.<sup>1</sup> How did the ex-sister Marguerite Françoise find out this odd meeting-place? I do not know. The marriage took place early in 1792, and the couple settled in the Rue Saint-Antoine, on the third floor of a house situated opposite the church of Petit Saint-Antoine.

Françoise Goupil, older than her husband by a year and a half, was not pretty. She was "a big spider," one of her contemporaries says,<sup>2</sup> and, no doubt, it was her height which attracted Hébert, who was very short. He found, however, other attractions. In announcing his approaching marriage to his sisters at Alençon, he wrote, "I must inform you, my dear friends, of the alliance I have contracted with a young lady, who is very amiable, and of an excellent disposition. My amiable intended is witty; in the old style I should say she was *une personne comme il faut*."<sup>3</sup> And, as a guarantee of the perfect respectability of his future wife, he adds: "She has, up to the present time, passed the whole of her life in a convent. To complete my happiness she has enough money to render me easy as to her future, if death should chance to part us."

Françoise, in fact, possessed, besides "the very small property of her parents," an annuity of 600 francs, which was paid her—for what reason we know not—by a Norman gentleman who played some part in the Chouan wars—Comte Le Veneur de Carrouges.<sup>4</sup> She also received from the

<sup>1</sup> *Règlements de la Société fraternelle des patriotes des deux sexes, défenseurs de la Constitution*, 1792.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionnaire biographique et historique des hommes marquants*. London, 1800, vol. v.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires de la Société historique du Cher*, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> I cannot discover why Françoise Goupil received an annuity from this gentleman. No mention of it is made in the notarial acts I have examined.

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national funds a pension of 700 livres as a secularised nun. Hébert also was now making money; the popularity of his two papers, *Père Duchesne*, and the *Journal du Soir* increased every day. "I have managed to make for myself," he wrote to his sisters, "a position that is pleasant and lucrative. I am, besides, interested in an enterprise which should bring me in plenty of money, and, which is still more fortunate, I owe all these resources to my patriotism, which brings me plenty of followers." This enterprise was an agency for translating the debates and decrees of the Assembly into all languages; but it does not appear to have lasted long. After August 10th, 1792, the *Père Duchesne* largely sufficed to keep Hébert, who was becoming more and more immersed in politics. He reigned over the Temple prison, which he visited almost every day. He was obliged to show himself at the meetings of the Commune, the Cordeliers, the Jacobins, and the Fraternal Society, which his wife continued to frequent. He had his printing office, his journals, visits to receive from patriots happy to shake hands with that — — *Père Duchesne*, and who retired discomfited after having been received in a neat apartment by a little, elegant gentleman, shaved that morning, well dressed, and whose gentle voice hesitated to utter the traditional oaths.

In spite of his position of firebrand in the furnace, Hébert returned home to dinner every day, smiling and peaceful. "I am very well, and very happy," he writes; "united to a wife who combines all good qualities with the charms of intellect, whose education is thorough, and character perfect. I lead the calmest and most peaceable existence." His home life is quite an idyll. "If M. Hébert," writes Françoise to her sister-in-law, "is kind enough to consider that his happiness consists in possessing me, I also, Mademoiselle, may certify that I am undeservedly, perfectly happy with him,

This is, no doubt, the same Le Veneur who, in March 1796 received, at his château at Carrouges, General Hoche, whom he had met in prison during the Terror. General Hédouville married a niece of Le Veneur, and she was still living in 1832; we find her at that time protesting against a domiciliary visit to Carrouges to search for the Duchesse de Berry. See La Sicotière's *Frotté et les insurrections normandes*, vol. i., p. 373; vol. ii., p. 725.

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and he does not cease to give me daily fresh proofs of his tenderness. I bear in my bosom, for the last three months, a precious pledge. He wishes that it may resemble me, and I wish it to be like its father—that is the continual subject of our disputes. We are both heartily in accord in wishing that you were here to bear witness of our love.”<sup>1</sup>

This letter is dated the end of July 1792—a fortnight before August 10th—when the “Terrible anger of Père Duchesne” was stirring up hate in the seething city, and inciting the ——— Marseillais against the ——— *ci-devants*. During the September massacres, during the troubles of the invasion, during the King’s trial, and the sad winter which followed, the same idyllic state continued at Hébert’s house. On February 8th, 1793, Françoise gave birth to a daughter “pretty as a Cupid,” and Anaxagoras Chaumette presented “Scipion Virginie”—that was the child’s name—to the Municipality. It was in the old bed from the Conception, with its “grey serge canopy,” that Françoise suckled her infant, for the ex-nun had brought to the Rue Saint-Antoine all her convent furniture, the chairs, the chest of drawers, the religious engraving which represented the supper at Emmaus. Françoise had preserved this most carefully, and her husband had written on the margin—from prudence more than profanity, perhaps; “The *sans-culotte* Jesus supping with two of his disciples in the *château* of a *ci-devant*.”<sup>2</sup>

One evening, his friend Desgenettes, whom he had met by accident, came to dine. The dinner was improvised, but excellent, and lasted three hours—three hours of conversation, which Desgenettes noted in his *Souvenirs*. “I am much attached to Christianity,” said “Mère Duchesne”;—“it is the most beautiful thing in our Revolution, and I preach it to our sisters at the Jacobins. All justice emanates from God; my principles are still those of Sister Goupil.”

Here there was a loud knocking at the door. It was a man, who came grumbling for the third time that day.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Société historique du Cher*, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs de la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ou Mémoires de R.D.G.*

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Hébert greeted him with, "Oh, there you are, you — — —!" They talked in this way some time; then the man left, and "Père Duchesne" resumed his place at the table. "When I am on duty at the Hôtel-de-Ville," he said, by way of excuse, "I employ a quite different kind of language." And he showed his friend a souvenir of the execution of Capet—a handkerchief steeped in blood wiped from the boards of the scaffold. Then the talk continued on the benefits of religion.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the conversation of "Mère Duchesne," whom the frontispiece of a pamphlet, published in 1791, had depicted to the Parisians as a virago, with a pipe in her mouth, holding a distaff in one hand, and a sabre in the other. To the ignorant public, this picture was the faithful portrait of "Pétronille Machefer," the wife of "Père Duchesne," his better half, his — — — spouse, his "Jacqueline." The names of Pétronille and Jacqueline, which Hébert had bestowed on his wife to amuse the gallery, were those of his two elder sisters,—pious women who lived in poverty at Alençon.

All this seems inconceivable. It would be easy to imagine an abominable pamphlet being scribbled in some vile den by a man drunken with brandy, and raving forth obscenities—but not in a quiet home, and under the influence of marital tenderness and paternal love! It was in the evening, after supper, that he wrote his articles; it was seated between his praying wife and his sleeping child that he invented those fearful metaphors which so much amused the ghouls who waited round the guillotine—"the national razor"—"the *vis-à-vis* of Master Sanson"—"the coach with thirty-six doors." It was thus that he composed his "great wrath against the slowness of the Convention in cutting short the *cochon* of the Temple." It was from there that he sent "to try on Capet's cravat," or "to ask the time at the little casement," the "hoyden of Calvados" who had assassinated the divine Marat, and "Babet big — the sister of Louis the guillotined" and "Queen Coco" (Mme. Roland) and "the Austrian Tigress, who, if justice were done, ought to be chopped into

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenirs de la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.*

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sausage meat to atone for all the blood she has shed." For he has "promised the head of Antoinette," and will go "and cut it off himself if they delay long in giving it him." And, to obtain it, he accuses the mother by the son—and of what a crime!

If the official report of this examination did not exist, bearing the signature of the inebriated child, we might refuse to believe it. The man who did these things returned home after performing such detestable tasks, dined well, no doubt related his day's doings to his wife, talked of his intended article for the morrow, and she approved and admired. "His hands are as pure as his soul," she wrote.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1793, the family moved into a lodging in the Cour des Miracles. A fish market was built there in 1784, which the fishmongers refused to occupy. This market, in 1792, was used as an iron factory, and the Cour des Miracles changed its name—which had a superstitious sound—and became the Cour des Forges. The pavilion which Hébert occupied was situated "at the bottom of the court when you come from the Rue Neuve de l'Égalité" (the Rue d'Aboukir); the house, which is now No. 9, seems to agree in all points with the descriptions in the official reports of the time of the house of Père Duchesne. The family lived on the first floor, the printing office was on the ground floor and *entresol*, with a staircase which communicated with the apartment.<sup>2</sup> It was here that on the quartidi of the third decade of Ventôse in the Year II.—that is to say, March 14th, 1794, at four in the morning—that sub-lieutenant of gendarmes Fribourg, accompanied by two men, arrested Père Duchesne, accused of plotting the restoration to the throne of Louis XVII.<sup>3</sup>

He was taken to the Conciergerie, whilst the *juge de paix* Mollard sealed up his papers. Françoise was left alone with her little girl and an "*officieuse*," and guarded by a gendarme. The same day, at six o'clock in the evening, the gendarmes appeared again. This time they came to fetch Mère Duchesne.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Société historique du Cher*, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the justice de paix of the 10th arrondissement.*

<sup>3</sup> The same. Official report of the search at Hébert's house in the Cour des Miracles.

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Before leaving, she entrusted to Citoyenne Marie Gentille, her "confidential woman," her watch and a pair of ear-rings that she did not want to take "down there."<sup>1</sup>

She was at the Conciergerie, in the women's quarter, when her husband was tried. She heard the rumour of the poltroonery of Hébert, who, choked with emotion, could only reply with a "Yes" or "No" to the questions of the President.<sup>2</sup> She must also have known—for every day, at the prison, they talked about *it*—the terrible agony of the man she loved;<sup>3</sup> his passage through Paris, crushed beneath the gibes of the mob, who mockingly repeated his former conceits: "You are angry, Père Duchesne; it is your turn now! Go and ask the time at the little casement!" and the cruelty of the headsman who playfully made "the national razor" hover for some seconds over the unfortunate wretches before it fell.

When he was dead, Françoise asked to be allowed to return to her child; but she received no reply. Two weeks passed and she thought she was forgotten. At the Conciergerie she had met, about a fortnight after she entered, poor Lucile Desmoulins. Their husbands had been bitter enemies, but both were dead, and their widows struck up a friendship. Each had a child almost of the same age. Little Horace Desmoulins was twenty months old; Virginie Hébert a little more than a year. The two mothers often sat on the same stone in the prison yard, and wept together. They were called to the Tribunal together;<sup>4</sup> Lucile, heroic, intrepid, happy that she was not to survive her Camille; the other, Mère Duchesne, stupefied, frightened, ashamed. They were condemned to death;<sup>5</sup> it was April 13th. It was noticed

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the justice de paix of the 10th arrondissement.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin du tribunal révolutionnaire*, 4th part.

<sup>3</sup> Buechez and Roux, *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution*, vol. xxxii., and also *Papiers saisis chez Robespierre* (in the name of Labourau). "Report of what I have seen and heard since my imprisonment: Hébert appeared weak, embarrassed, and the last night in the prison he had a paroxysm of despair."

<sup>4</sup> The trial of the woman Hébert is to be found in the *National Archives*, W. 315.

<sup>5</sup> The act of accusation represents the woman Hébert as "conspirator" with her husband, the immediate agent of a system devised by a horde of foreign bankers to corrupt some unworthy representatives of the people;

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that when they returned to the prison, Lucile was radiant, Françoise sobbing. Hoping to gain time, she declared she was three months pregnant. A woman, named Prioux, attached to the Conciergerie for that purpose, took her into a room near the office, where the two prison doctors, Théry and Bayard, after a very rapid examination, stated "there was no reason for a reprieve," and the unfortunate woman was led away to the "toilette." A man, named Grandpré, who chanced to be near, heard her say to Lucile, enviously: "You are happy; there is not a shadow of suspicion on your conduct; you will leave life by the grand staircase!" What was passing in her mind?

What a misfortune it is that history only notes a few facts coldly related in official reports—some little corner of private life that a sudden expression unveils—a phrase picked up by chance; and that is all! In spite of every effort, intense curiosity, and minute and patient research, the real drama that is acted in human hearts remains for ever unknown. Of what was the ex-nun thinking as the cart jolted through the streets? One witness says "that she chatted with Lucile with an air of indifference." All agree that, at the departure, "she kept a good countenance." "In vain," says another, "did they cry around her: 'Ah! ah! la Mère Duchesne; to the guillotine; *drelin, drelin!* she is going to put her nose through the little window'; she remained unmoved." It was warm weather; from the tumbril she could catch a glimpse of the interior of first-floor rooms through the open windows. As it was six o'clock in the evening the tables were laid; people ran to the windows, napkin on chin, to see "the day's batch" pass, and the children sat in their tall chairs eating their meal. Further on, she passed before the closed door of the Convent of the Conception, and the woman about to die must have seen, in her mind's eye, the long corridors, the green shrubs, the silent cell, herself in her white robe, veil, and blue mantle; she must have remembered the oath pronounced there "for the love and service of God, to live all her life in obedience, chastity, and perpetual seclusion."

the accomplice of Kock, du Frey, des Despagnac." W. 345. The woman was defended by the advocate La Fleutrie.



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Then the corner of the Place was suddenly turned, and there was the open space, the crowd, the Tuileries, and the Champs Elysées, already green in the radiant spring. Here her courage deserted her. "The woman Hébert," says a note, "was nearly dying at the end of the fatal journey; they were obliged to help her to mount the scaffold";<sup>1</sup> and then came the agony of waiting, the horrible bewilderment, the choking in the throat that prevented her from even crying out, the wild anguish of seeing beneath her all the multitude of living persons jeering at her, the instinctive recoil from the inevitable doom, the brutal hands which seized her, the plank, the deadly stroke.

A Parisian, who noted daily his impressions in a "memento" which remains unpublished, found nothing more to jot down that evening than this: "The spring is very mild; all the trees in the gardens are in flower, and those which are not fruit trees have their leaves. Not for many years have things looked so promising, or have we seen such a forward season."

And what became of the child? A brother of Mme. Hébert took care of her at first. This compassionate relative was named Jean Jacques Goupil, and he lived on a temporary pension as "a defender wounded in the service of the country."<sup>2</sup> But he, no doubt, died shortly afterwards, for a deed in the Year III. states that "citizen Jacques Christophe Marquet, printer, Rue de Vaugirard is chosen guardian of Scipion Virginie Hébert, by the desire of her friends, in default of any relatives of the said minor."<sup>3</sup> It does not seem that she had any inheritance to receive beyond the dishonoured name of her father. The goods of condemned persons were, moreover, confiscated. The poor child, thus

<sup>1</sup> *Procès fameux*, Désessart.

<sup>2</sup> "And before replacing our seals, Citizen Jean Jacques Goupil, brother of the wife of Citizen Hébert, stated to us that the little painted box found in the bottom of the writing-table contained nothing but some money belonging to him, and forming part of the temporary pension paid to him at the Ministry of War as a defender wounded in the defence of the country, for which reason he requested us to hand it to him, both for his own support, and that of his sister's child — The 29th of Ventôse, Year II." *Archives of the justice de paix of the 10th arrondissement.*

<sup>3</sup> The same.

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brought up by charity, lived, however. She became under-mistress of a boarding-school, and married a pastor of the Reformed Church, who exercised his ministry in a village in the environs of Châteaudun.

Scipion Virginie Hébert died in Paris, in the Rue du Faubourg du Roule, July 11th, 1830,<sup>1</sup> at the age of thirty-seven.

<sup>1</sup> *Death register of the old 1st arrondissement.* "The thirteenth of July one thousand eight hundred and thirty, at half-past ten in the morning. Certificate of death of Scipion Virginie Hébert, under-mistress of a school, aged thirty-seven years, married to — Née, pastor of the Reformed Church at Mézières (Eure-et-Loir) there residing, born at Paris, died Rue du Faubourg du Roule No. 79, the day before yesterday at eight o'clock in the evening. Witnessed by us, Henri Michel Paulmier, deputy-mayor of the first arrondissement of Paris, on the declaration of Sieurs François Coulon, bank clerk, aged twenty-one years, living in the same street and number, and Pierre Mallet Christy, domestic servant, aged fifty-two years, same residence, who has declared that he cannot write. The first witness has signed with us, after his statement had been read."

## MIMIE

A PERUSAL of the two volumes of the *Procès de Joseph Le Bon, recueilli par la Citoyenne Varlé*, published at Amiens in 1795, may be classed among nightmares. During twenty sittings, the survivors of the hecatombs of Arras and Cambrai gave evidence in the ancient Salle du Bailliage, at Amiens, against the former member of the Convention, and so extraordinary are the statements of these phantoms in mourning, that one begins to doubt the truth of their depositions. Whole streets were depopulated; nonagenarians and sixteen-year-old girls had their throats cut after a trial that was a mockery. Death was scoffed at, insulted, and adorned. There were executions accompanied by music, with battalions of children to guard the scaffold; there was debauchery, cynicism, and the refined cruelty of a drunken satrap. It was a novel by the Marquis de Sade in epic form. In short, whilst reading of all these horrors, it seems as though the entire district, terrorised for a long time past, was at last unburdening its dread, and, by overwhelming the wretched man at the bar—the scapegoat of an abhorred and conquered régime—revenging its cowardice.

Erect and straight as a dart, the blue-eyed, pale-complexioned prisoner, whose mouth was continually twitching with nervousness,<sup>1</sup> looked exceedingly young—barely thirty years of age. Attentive, and with an astonished expression

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Le Bon's description, as given in A. J. Paris' *Histoire de Joseph Le Bon*, is as follows: Height, five feet six inches, chestnut hair and eyebrows, slightly bald in front, ordinary nose, blue eyes, average mouth, pitted with smallpox. The *Memoirs* of Louise Fual state that Le Bon always wore very white linen, that his hands were very carefully attended to, and that his manner of dressing displayed coquetry. His ceremonial dress consisted, in addition to a frock coat and blue breeches, of a Henry IV hat with a tricolour plume, a scarf hanging from the waist, and a trailing sword.



JOSEPH LE BON.

DEPUTY OF THE PAS-DE-CALAIS IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

*(From an engraving in the possession of BARON DE VINCK.)*



on his face, he listened—like a man to whom someone is relating a dream long since forgotten. To the questions that were put to him, he replied: “I don’t know.”—“It is possible, but I don’t recollect. I obeyed orders.” Dismayed at the horrors unfolded, he ejaculated the astounding words: “You ought to blow out my brains.” When the nine children of the Toursel family, whose parents he had killed, appeared, followed by the eight others of Madame Preston of Cambrai, and nine more accompanied by their mother, Madame Magnier, whom he had made a widow, he was heard to murmur: “If you are going to call the widows and orphans . . .” Whereupon he sat down with a discontented air, as though he considered this was an unfair argument. As for the rest, his attitude was so cold, so calm, and so astonished that he gave the impression of an enigma. Was he mentally irresponsible?—Was he acting?—Or was he a victim?

When we follow his career in Arras, step by step, from the time of his infancy in a very modest house occupied by his father, a crier, at the corner of the *Marché-aux-Filets* and the *Rue du Nocquet d’Or*, the mystery continues.

First of all a day-boy with the Oratorians—an intelligent and thoughtful lad, with bursts of enthusiasm—then a boarder at Juilly, shortly afterwards a probationer and professor of rhetoric at the Beaune Oratory, and finally, in 1789,<sup>1</sup> a priest at the *Quatre Temps de Noël*, he trod the holy path which he had chosen, upheld by an ardent, almost extravagant faith, a rigorous respect for religious rules, and a desire for action and proselytism. His pupils loved him “to the point of idolatry.” His letters to two of them, Masson and Millié, whom he recruited for the Oratory, have been preserved. In the Masson family, the father of which was a silk-merchant at Beaune, he became an oracle, an arbiter, and a counsellor who was obeyed. Moreover, the whole town knew and esteemed him. He was to be seen everywhere, exploring the suburbs and expending his energy in a hundred ways. “Nothing fatigued him; he was to be seen striding about the streets from morning to night.”

<sup>1</sup> *Joseph Le Bon*, by *Emile Le Bon*.

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One day—it was May 19th, 1790—his pupils, enticed by the announcement of a federal *fête* at Dijon, which is ten leagues from Beaune, and which was a mere walk for the young men whom Père Le Bon had accustomed to long excursions, escaped from college. On Père Sauriat, the superior, being informed of this escapade, he held Père Le Bon responsible. Beside himself with anger at this reproach, he rushed forth, covered three leagues in an hour, under a broiling sun, arrived at Nuits, where he procured a carriage, overtook the truants at Gevrey and, exhorting them to return, brought them back to Beaune by a road whose hamlets all bear celebrated names: Chambertin, Echezeaux, Musigny, Vougeot, Richebourg, Romanée, Saint-Georges and l'Ermitage—enticing and terrible stages for an extenuated pedestrian.<sup>1</sup>

When he entered the town in the evening at the head of his band of rhetoricians, Père Le Bon was drunk. Whilst crossing the square he pulled off his bands and threw them into the gutter, and on entering the college he tore his priestly costume to pieces, declaring that he no longer belonged to the Order. When, on the following day, he was in a cooler frame of mind, he attempted to go back on his determination, but the scandal having been a public one his superiors accepted his resignation and he left the college.

Devoid of resources, he withdrew into the family of one of his pupils at Ciel, in the neighbourhood of Verdun-sur-Saone, where, lazy and embittered, he remained nearly a year, seeking a position, and hoping that the Oratory would re-open its doors to him. He then took the civic oath and thus obtained the small living of Vernois, just outside Beaune, with a salary of 700 livres, a cottage, and a strip of garden. What a fall for his ambition, and what a miserable stage for his activity!

At the little house in the Rue du Nocquet d'Or, at Arras, simple and pious Mme. Le Bon learnt at one and the same time that her eldest child, whom she had dedicated to God, and of whom she was so proud, had left his convent, had taken the oath, and had accepted a constitutional living. She was first of all incredulous, and for four days she continued,

<sup>1</sup> Villages famous for their wines.—*Translator.*

in silence, to attend to her household duties. One night she rose from her bed, opened the door, and, going into the deserted street, began to call out her son's name in a lamentable voice.<sup>1</sup>

Her husband tried to calm her, but she became furious, broke the crockery, and, flying at her daughter Henriette, attempted to strangle her. At this the neighbours rushed in and overpowered her; and when, the next morning—it was June 24th, 1791—the inspector of police put in his appearance to draw up a report, the unfortunate woman, who was in convulsions, yelled that they were hiding her son “whom she knew had been in the town for the past week. . . .” She was carried off, bound, to the *Maison du Bon Pasteur*. Some good souls considered that this was a just punishment for the apostate.

Informed of this event by letter, the apostate arrived on July 3rd. It was hoped that the meeting of mother and son would lead, if not to her recovery, at any rate to an attenuation of her madness. *Le Bon* rushed to the asylum; but the sick woman's delirium was so violent that he was not allowed to see her.

Through the door of her padded room he heard, as he says in one of his letters, “her piercing and mournful cries which could be heard all over the neighbourhood. He returned home in despair, to find things in a pitiable condition. His father had “aged ten years, could hardly stand upright, and was incapable of attending to business.” His brother *Léandre*, who was twenty-three years of age, was without employment; and his little sister *Henriette* was not yet sixteen years old. The ex-Oratorian was horrified at the idea

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Paris, *Histoire de Joseph Le Bon*; Deramecourt, *Le Clergé du diocèse d'Arras*; Emile Le Bon, *Joseph Le Bon*, &c.

“In my first ardour I rushed to my mother's retreat. In spite of her fixed ideas, I did not despair, if I was only able to see and speak to her, of making a good impression. Père Spithallier, the superior of the oratory, accompanied me; and we divided the rôles which we were to play. I thought that in less than a quarter of an hour joy might succeed sadness . . . : vain and useless enterprise! My mother's fury, far from diminishing, daily increases, making her quite unapproachable. When she was still at home, she broke everything within reach of her hands, ruining and devastating the house. She now combines with her frenzied transports piercing and mournful cries, which can be heard all over the neighbourhood.”—Letter from J. Le Bon, July 25th, 1790.



## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

of abandoning his family in this critical situation, so, as almost all ecclesiastics had refused to take the oath, with a result that there were plenty of vacancies in the district, he accepted the constitutional living of Neuville-Vitasse, a village at a distance of one league from the town, with a salary of 1,850 livres.

He arrived at his new post in a state of utter poverty, without even a chair with which to furnish the presbytery. That was docilely handed over to him by the non-sworn curé whom he was to succeed. Unable to install himself there, through want of money, he first of all resided as a boarder at the house of a patriot who let him a small room and invited him to eat at his own table. As soon as he had said Mass, Abbé Le Bon, at eight o'clock in the morning, sat down at his desk and spent the day reading. If the church bell rang he answered the summons with punctuality, hurried through the service, and hastened to return to his host's, where he resumed his reading. In the evening, when the weather was fine, he went, always alone, for a walk in a small wood neighbouring the village. If he showed little zeal in the exercise of his priesthood, his parishioners showed no more when attending "the intruder's" Mass, for almost all of them were faithful to their old pastor, who remained in the village. Moreover, Le Bon astonished them. One first communion day, they saw him, after vespers, conducting his girls and boys to the wine-shop, where he treated them to beer, and these new manners shocked the good people of Neuville. Sometimes the intruder received visitors from Arras, and on these occasions he brought over his sister Henriette to assist him. His beadle, Ghislain Morel, who was almost the only sheep in his flock, hastily furnished the dining room at the presbytery, turned the spit, decanted the old wine, and sat at one end of the table. There used to be present on these occasions some of the advocates of the towns, amongst others Messieurs de Robespierre, and also the curé's cousin-german, Elizabeth Regnietz, who, from time to time, came to spend a few days at Neuville. Le Bon familiarly called her Mimie.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> She was born at St. Pol on April 7th, 1770, and was the daughter of Antoine Joseph Bernier, an innkeeper, and Marie Joseph Vanden. Le

Elizabeth Regniez was a sturdy, fresh, red-haired girl of one and twenty, with a coarse, fat face. Her mother, the widow of an innkeeper of St. Pol, was very religious, and it was not without qualms of conscience that she saw a sort of intimacy spring up between her daughter and her cousin Joseph, who, amongst the non-sworn clergy, was regarded as a renegade.

Le Bon's hatred of his former condition, as well as his influential relations with patriots of advanced ideas, served him splendidly. In addition to his position as curé of Neuville, he carried out the duties of vicar at Saint-Waast, at Arras, which brought his salary up to more than three thousand francs. On September 2nd, 1792, he was elected deputy to the Convention; on the 15th his fellow citizens appointed him mayor of the town; and a month later he announced his betrothal to his cousin Mimie—to the indignation of all pious souls, and to the despair of Mme. Regniez, who only resigned herself to her daughter's marriage in order to avoid a greater scandal. Le Bon did nothing, moreover, to mollify his aunt.<sup>1</sup> There are still in existence letters that he addressed to his betrothed, whilst he was still the officiating priest of Neuville. What singular love-letters they are! Thus, he writes to his charming cousin:

Bon was on intimate relations with the Regniez family. Abraham Regniez, Elizabeth's brother, and her cousin, Lamoral Vasseur, lived at the Neuville presbytery. *Le Clergé du diocèse d'Arras pendant la Révolution*, by Abbé Deramecourt (Arras, 1885).

<sup>1</sup> The following is a letter addressed by Joseph Le Bon to Elizabeth Regniez on June 12th, 1792. "I thank you, my dearie, for the details which you have sent us in regard to the amusing disputes of the Grey Sisters, and on the subject of the expedition of the brave fellows of St. Pol. Our young men were transported with holy rapture on learning of the exploits of brothers Louis and Alexandre. Tell them, however, not to expend their hatred on poor imbeciles who are the dupes either of former nobles or of the priestly fry, but rather to look further in advance, and especially to aim at the extirpation of that double scourge of humanity." J. Le Bon next sent Elizabeth some lessons in orthography, accompanied by a pot of strawberries, and signed himself "Your good friend, J. L." When the aunt's final scruples were overcome, he made his declaration on October 19th, and proposed to his cousin that she should come to live at Arras, where he was unable, he said, to abandon his aged father. If she accepted, she could then publish the banns. "I leave everything to her. We seek happiness, and we shall obtain it if you, like myself, love simplicity, and are free from prejudice.—J. L." *National Archives*, documents quoted by Abbé Deramecourt.

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"Here I am, a wholesale dealer in Masses. I say as many as three on Sundays and *fête*-days. At five o'clock in the morning, I set off on horseback to make a tour of my parish and sell my merchandise to clients. My customers increase daily. I sermonise to right and left. Everywhere I exert myself to the utmost and business is all the better for it."

Sometimes the charming cousin "hesitates," so he sermonises her in her turn.

"You are uneasy, uncertain, and embarrassed. . . . If I love you it is for yourself. Take care not to bring about your own misfortune. I would rather renounce my plans than cause you the slightest trouble. My aunt is the most excellent person in the world ; but . . . but I have worn the dress of rogues, and as she respects those who wear it she imagines that none of them are able or ought to think of . . . Will she look with a kindly eye, if her daughter . . . Ah ! Ah ! cut and trim at your ease and send me frequently news of the results of your operations. I embrace you with all my heart."

The marriage of Joseph Le Bon and Elizabeth Regniez was celebrated on November 5th, 1792, at the St. Pol *mairie*, and in that district it was the first purely civil marriage, the first marriage of a priest.<sup>1</sup>

Never was there a more tragic union. After seven months' sojourn at Arras, Le Bon was called to a seat in the Convention, in succession to his colleague Maniez, who was under an indictment. He left for Paris on June 29th, accompanied by his wife and brother-in-law, Abraham Regniez, who had suddenly become very devoted to him, and whom he employed as secretary. They lodged for the time

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the St.-Pol mairie.*

On this occasion Le Bon delivered a speech, which he afterwards sent to the Convention.

"Magistrates of the people," he said. "I have just set an example which has long been awaited by the infinitely small number of virtuous priests. I have just overthrown the ferocious prejudice which condemns a class of men to live in a condition of crime, and which only leaves them a choice of evils. May the solemn step which I have taken leave them no excuse. May they at last make up their minds to respect both nature and society : nature, by obeying its author's laws, and by not stifling in the germ beings whom he calls to the light ; society, by no longer using their ministry as an aid in abusing the wife or daughter of another."—*Drame-court's Clergé du diocèse d'Arras pendant la Révolution.*

## MIMIE

being with a compatriot, their friend Guffroy; and a month later took up their residence in the Rue d'Argenteuil, in an apartment let at 650 livrès.

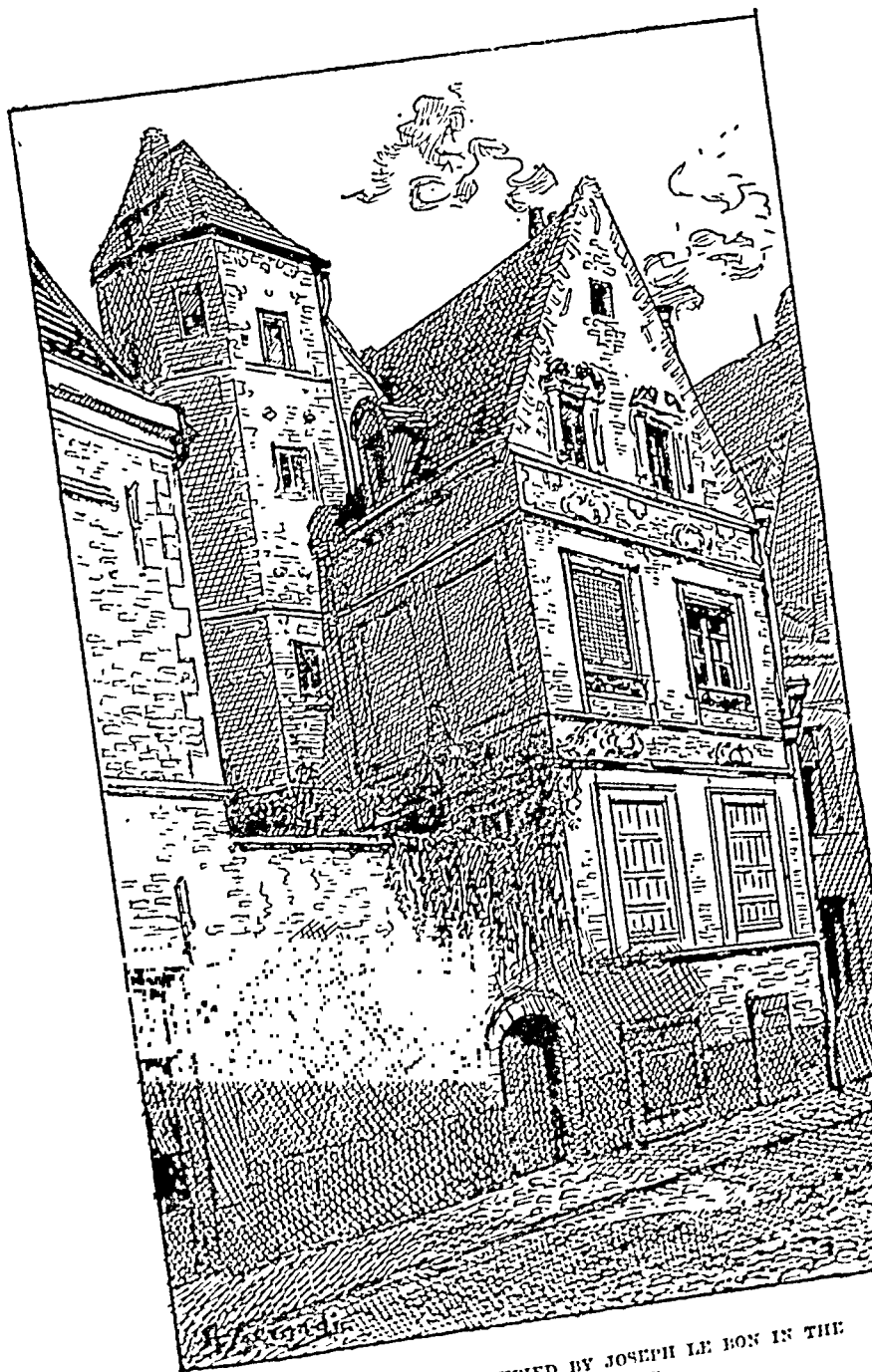
But Le Bon was not to be there long. His stay at the Convention presents little interest; for on August 9th, succumbing to his need for action, he accepted a mission in the Northern Departments. He was still "that original character whom nothing fatigued, and who formerly, at Beaune, could be seen striding about the streets from morning to night."

He now delighted in travelling post, in abusing hostlers, and in riding horses to death. He sped from Boulogne to Arras, and thence to Pernes and Saint Pol, where he spent a few days with his wife's family, which seems to indicate that Aunt Regniez had relented. He returned to Paris in October for the birth of his first child. His daughter Pauline was born on October 16th, 1793, at the very moment when, in the neighbouring street, the tumbril that was bearing Marie Antoinette to the scaffold was passing. A fortnight later Le Bon, his wife, and his child set out for Arras, where they arrived November 1st.

His mission, which lasted eight months, is one of the most terrifying chapters in history. But this is not the place to recount it, since we are here concerned with the private life of the member of the Convention during his sanguinary proconsulate.

Mimie remained with him, nursing her little daughter, who "progressed miraculously." The household was a very tender and united one. They lived, moreover, in intimate family relations with the judges of the revolutionary tribunal, the jurors, the prosecutors, and even the bailiffs, jailers, and the executioner. Le Bon and his family lodged in an old house in the Rue Saint-Maurice, a building, dating from the sixteenth century, with a spiral stone staircase, in a turret which led to two floors, composed of a single room with an alcove closed by shutters. He surrounded himself with trustworthy friends, recruited from amongst his old colleagues at the Oratory. His secretary,<sup>1</sup> Faguet, had, in 1788, been

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Paris, *loc. cit.*



HOUSE FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY JOSEPH LE BON IN THE  
RUE SAINT-MAURICE.  
A sketch from nature by Gérardin.

## MIMIE

supervisor at the Beaune college; Warnier, the president of the Boulogne tribunal, had been professor of the sixth class; whilst the two assistant judges who placed in Le Bon's hands the renewal of their priestly abjuration, had also been Oratorians. Three other former pupils were to be counted amongst the members of the circuit; and Célestin Lefetz, vice-president of the Arras tribunal, was an unfrocked canon of St. Geneviève.<sup>1</sup> A juryman named Caubrières was the buffoon of this band: he had a pretty talent for singing *carmagnoles* and other revolutionary songs, and he used greatly to amuse Citoyenne Le Bon by the funny manner in which he related the day's executions. "He makes me," she used to say, "split my sides with laughing."<sup>2</sup> But the most jovial member of the company was Remy, the intimate guest of the Le Bons, and who was always dressed in a yellow coat, which led to Mimie calling him "her little canary."<sup>3</sup> Le Bon had instituted him the "purveyor of his terrible friends, his wife and the guillotine," and the little canary, who was ever hopping and chirping, "boasted of having from thirty to forty heads of fathers of families to his account." The tender Mimie herself did not disdain to put her shoulder to the wheel; as is shown by a letter found amongst the papers of the revolutionary committee, and in which she denounces two poor women of Arras<sup>4</sup> as "very suspicious characters." The following fragment of a dialogue between herself and her husband has been preciousy noted and handed

<sup>1</sup> Wallon, *Les représentants du peuple en mission*, vol. v., p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Caubrières came to relate to the woman Le Bon that he had questioned the accused and found nothing against them, but that he had first of all teased them, and then sent them to the guillotine, whereupon "the woman laughed fit to split her sides."—Deramecourt, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Guffroy, *Les secrets du Joseph Le Bon*.

<sup>4</sup> "Hardly had Citoyenne Le Bon arrived at Arras with her husband than she said to the public prosecutor, Demuliez, with a vixenish air: 'Five thousand heads must fall here!' The public prosecutor replied: 'The devil! I should have difficulty in finding 125 (*cinq quarterons*) in the whole department.' 'Well,' said she, in her husband's presence, 'if you don't find five thousand your own head will fall.' 'Look here,' said Le Bon, 'how many do you think there are in the district of Bapaume?' 'I don't know any who could be guillotined. There are many people who are not very republican, but there are no counter revolutionaries.' On hearing this, either Le Bon or his wife said: 'I see quite well that you won't speak, but my little canary will point them out to me.'—Deramecourt, *loc. cit.*

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down :—"Look, friend," said she with her peasant's accent, "look at that one with the mug of an aristocrat." "Yes, Mimie, you are right," replied her husband "leave it to me. I'll settle the b——. Oh! she has got guillotine<sup>1</sup> stamped on her face. . . ."

Mimie rarely missed witnessing the executions from the balcony of the Comedy Theatre, side by side with her be-plumed husband, who, surrounded by his courtiers, Hidoux, Gamot, Béru, Darthé, Gouillart, swaggeringly leant upon a scimitar. The square was so small that their noses almost touched the scaffold, and nothing in the expression of the faces of the condemned passed unobserved. Le Bon, who knew them well, imitated them in advance, and alluded to their familiar peculiarities by some such phrase as: "That one will cry *bah! bah! bah!* in facing the little window, and that one will say *quay!*" The little canary cracked jokes; musicians played the *Ça ira*; there was a gallery for the spectators and a refreshment bar at the foot of the guillotine. When the massacre was over, the executioner and bailiffs sometimes amused themselves by arranging the nude and decapitated bodies thrown upon the gory pavement in obscene or ridiculous attitudes!<sup>2</sup>

Then the spectators supped and supped well. In that town, where commerce was annihilated, where the houses of entire quarters were closed, where huge buildings such as Saint-Waast, the Abbatale, the Baudets, the Orphelines, the Hôtel Dieu, the Providence, the Capucins, and the Vivier overflowed with prisoners—in that Arras—the cursed city—which travellers used to avoid by making detours of ten leagues, the Court of Le Bon and his wife lived in luxury, at any rate as far as their table was concerned, as is shown by the eloquent bills preserved in the National Archives.<sup>3</sup> The ex-Oratorian was fond of shell-fish, and in spite of the

<sup>1</sup> Guffroy, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> "When Louis de la Vieville was executed with his daughter and her servant for having brought from Brussels a parrot which very frequently repeated the words, 'Long live the Emperor, long live the King, long live our priests,'—although it refused to give evidence at the trial by repeating its fanatical cry—the bird was handed over to Mme. Le Bon, so that she could teach it to say 'Long live the nation.'"—Deramecourt, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Guffroy, *loc. cit.*

decrees of the Committee of Public Safety in regard to maritime fisheries, the Boulogne flotilla was sent out into the open to fetch oysters for the proconsul's table.<sup>1</sup> The chocolate for his *bavaroises* and fine flour for his pastry were the result of requisitions, whilst middle-class households were reduced to rations of half a pound of bread made of barley and oats. It would be easy to make the picture an appalling one, and I am purposely giving the least brutal facts—only those which are indispensable for this sketch.

Le Bon entered Cambrai on May 5th, 1794, at about five o'clock in the evening.

The inhabitants of the town, who as yet only knew him by reputation, first of all saw a procession of fifteen to twenty armed men, with "wild eyes and excited faces, and wearing *carmagnoles*<sup>2</sup> and trousers." The last-named are noted in all the accounts, and appear to have produced a more unfavourable impression than anything else. These men regarded the astounded people with a bold air. At the side of their hats, which were surmounted by red caps, they wore tall tricolour feathers. They were all armed with big sabres and pistols stuck in their belts. These formed the advance guard. Behind them came the member of the Convention; a fairly tall, thin man, who held himself exceedingly erect, "almost bent backwards"; his complexion highly coloured—it is said through the use of rouge; his cheeks pitted with

<sup>1</sup> Guffroy says, "Darthé, one of Le Bon's jurors, being on a mission at Boulogne, infringed a decree of the Committee of Public Safety, which had forbidden the fishing vessels to leave the harbour, by sending them to fetch oysters for Joseph Le Bon." No great crime in this. Generally speaking we must beware of Guffroy's exaggerations—a poor individual—and also of those of the witnesses who gave evidence at Le Bon's trial. There is no documentary evidence which will permit us to challenge them, but they are too frequent, and, what is more, they are improbable. What can one think, for instance, of the following revelation by Guffroy. "At a meeting attended by Le Bon, Daillet, Galand, Caubrières, Darthé, and perhaps some others, you, Le Bon, spoke of the number of prisoners, and of the difficulty of getting rid of them one by one. Whereupon someone said, 'Here's a difficulty indeed! Well, all we have got to do is to serve them a bowl of verdigris!' 'No,' replied another, 'their soup must be made in a large copper boiler, which has been allowed, as though by neglect, to become covered with verdigris.' This plan leaked out and became known to the prisoners. And you yourself, Le Bon, in your heedlessness, boasted of it to your worthy wife and faithful executioners."

<sup>2</sup> A kind of jacket in vogue during the Revolution of 1793.—*Translator.*



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small-pox; and his hair, which was gathered up on to his neck in an enormous pigtail, in disorder. He bent himself slightly to twirl a sabre and immediately afterwards resumed his stiff attitude, shouting remarks which no one understood, and apostrophising the inquisitive people who had collected in front of the houses.<sup>1</sup> Following him came a band of men, all wearing red caps and most of them with bare chests. These were the members of the tribunal, the executioner and his assistants. The whole of his staff took up its quarters at the house of an *émigré*, M. Parigot de Sautenai, and five days later the guillotine was working.<sup>2</sup>

Mimie arrived two days after her husband, bringing her little daughter, whom she had weaned. An order was given to bring daily to Dechy's house two or three bottles of milk from the hospice dairy. For Citoyenne Le Bon had hardly arrived when she found the house of M. de Sautenai too small, and chose as her residence that of a Royalist, Mme. Dechy, who had been guillotined the previous day. The house was full of "wines, hams, sugar, and poultry," and it had an additional advantage in possessing a balcony which was opposite the place of execution. "We are able from here," said Mimie, "to see the apricots fall."<sup>3</sup> The sight was worth seeing. From the time the first victim left prison until the last head had fallen, the great bell of the town—formerly the King's—solemnly tolled. A crowd of children stood around the guillotine, and as at Arras there was music, with a theatrical performance immediately after the executions. For Le Bon, in addition to judges and executioner, had brought with him an orchestra and a company of players.

Mme. Dechy's house was arranged "for receptions," and Mimie took it into her head to give *fêtes*. The little canary undertook to send out invitations, or rather summonses, to the feminine population of Cambrai, invitations which they did not dare to refuse. Refreshments, *liqueurs*, bottles of cherries preserved in brandy, and sugar loaves, all of which had been seized at the houses of those executed on the previous day, were served. The victims' glass, china, and silver were to be

<sup>1</sup> P. J. Thénard, *Quelques souvenirs de la Terreur à Cambrai*.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Paris, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> P. J. Thénard, *loc. cit.*

recognised upon those occasions. Mimie strutted about and “gave herself the airs of a queen”; for she now assumed an official character and, at public ceremonies, had her child, who was acclaimed by the guests, carried about ostentatiously. An assiduous attendant at the proceedings of the tribunal, she placed herself at her husband’s side opposite the jurors and, after each examination, indicated her opinion to them “by passing her hand across her neck.”<sup>1</sup>

A lady of the town, Mme. Douay, having decided to solicit her husband’s liberty, once entered by mistake into a drawing-room where Citoyenne Le Bon was sitting surrounded by some jurors. Seeing the woman in tears, the wife of the member of the Convention cried out, “What’s this? What does she want?” “To speak to the representative,” was the reply. “Impossible!” ejaculated Mimie. “Put her out!” Her expressions were sometimes sinister. In the evening, on sitting down to table, where she daily ate in company with her husband, the judges, the public prosecutor, and the executioner, who was a sort of herculean-framed ogre, named Outredebanque, she used graciously to ask, when social obligations had prevented her following the tribunal’s proceedings, “How many calves’ heads have we this evening?” The ever-yawning common grave, into which the victims’ bodies were thrown pellmell, she called “Le Bon’s salting-tub.”<sup>2</sup> And thus, for many, many years after the Terror, the inhabitants of Cambrai were haunted by the recollection of this “hyena,” who was more abhorred, perhaps, than her redoubtable husband. It is even not very long ago since a song was sung in the district with the following refrain :

“Quinze par jour, je m’en contente !”  
J’ai, de la sorte oui . . . parler  
Madame la représentante  
Qui voulait voir le sang couler.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. J. Thénard, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> The same.

<sup>3</sup> A local tradition. The recollection of other songs of the period has been retained. Here are some lines on Galand, Le Bon’s friend and assessor :

“Galand pourra vous apprendre  
Sans livre et sans almanach

# ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

But this horrible state of things came to an end.

On the 11th of Thermidor, whilst a *fête* was in full swing, it was rumoured that Robespierre was dead. Without losing time in collecting together his papers, Le Bon immediately left Cambrai, accompanied by Mimie and Pauline. On passing through Arras, at midnight, however, he left them there, with a hasty adieu, and, getting into a postchaise, reached Paris.<sup>1</sup> On the 15th he was imprisoned at the Luxembourg. Frantic with fear, his wife took refuge with her mother at Saint-Pol, where she was left alone for a month. "Accused of acts of oppression," she was, on the 8th of Fructidor, arrested in her turn, and on being taken to Arras was imprisoned with her daughter at the Providence.<sup>2</sup> She was about to become a mother for the second time.<sup>3</sup> Henriette Le Bon came daily to the prison<sup>4</sup> to amuse Pauline and take her out for a walk. Abraham Regniez, for his part, had left for Paris, in order to assist Le Bon in preparing his justification.

Nobody, however, occupied himself with the member of the Convention. He was forgotten in prison; and as he

Un jeu terrible à comprendre . . .  
Un nouveau jeu de tric-trac.  
Lui seul, au gré de sa chance  
Peut mettre têtes à bas.  
Et c'est par là qu'il commence  
Sans quoi il ne gagne pas."

<sup>1</sup> Emile Le Bon.

<sup>2</sup> A letter from the national agent for the district of Saint-Pol, dated 25th of Fructidor, Year II., informed the Committee of Supervision of her removal to Arras, and the Assembly decided that she should be detained in the former Providence establishment.—*Arras sous la Révolution*, by E. Lecegne.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Division du Comité de Surveillance*, "it was the custom, based on Republican principles, that female prisoners in such a condition should be permitted to enter the Maison de l'Humanité, to be treated there until their re-establishment"; but an exception was made in the case of the woman Le Bon. "Considering that Citizen Murry, the manager of the Maison de l'Humanité, is the intimate friend of Daillet, Darthé, and Caubrières, Joseph Le Bon's agents, it is decreed that she remain at the Maison de la Providence, where she will receive all the assistance and conveniences necessitated by her condition."—E. Lecegne, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> "I was still in prison when Le Bon's wife was brought there. I saw her visited by all the Terrorists, then still free. One day I heard her say, 'I have four thousand heads to have taken off, for my reign is going to recommence. I have always reigned, even in prison.'"—Evidence of Madame Thellier, *Procès de Le Bon*.

himself began to see that it was best to keep quiet, he suffered imprisonment in patience for more than a year.

The letters which he wrote to his wife in the course of those fourteen months' detention have been preserved. Addressed from the prisoner in Paris to the prisoner at Arras, they are disconcerting; for, apart from a few very rare phrases in the style of the period, in which Le Bon exalts his "Roman virtue," or in which he declares that he is happy "to be persecuted by the wicked," we find in them only the expressions of the most tender father, of the most loving husband. What solicitude he shows for the health of his dear Mimie! With what joy does he learn, on the 19th of Brumaire, of the birth of his little son Emile. "He'll remember some day, the jolly little fellow, that he was born in prison."<sup>1</sup> What anxiety he showed to know if the child took well to the breast, if he were thriving, and whether or not he were tiring his mamma. She, on her side, tried to encourage her husband by telling him about Pauline's games and Emile's progress. Guiding the baby's little hand, she writes four words for him to his father. And he, who had never seen his son, and who was never to see him, drew the child's imaginary portrait.<sup>2</sup>

His thoughts return ceaselessly to his dear little Pauline. In one of the prisons where he sojourned, he became attached to a nine-months-old child named Julie, who was imprisoned with her young mother and whose gentle ways reminded him of his own daughter. . . . He longed to touch this little Julie and clasp her in his arms; but he asked himself if he dare do it. What would the mother say? Was he not

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the register of births of the town of Arras.

To-day, on the 6th of Brumaire, Year III. of the Republic, one and indivisible, at seven o'clock, there appeared before me, Augustin Xavier Rouvroy, public officer elected to register the birth of citizens in this commune, Dominique Joseph Léandre Le Bon, employee at the Hôpital de l'Égalité, and paternal uncle of the child hereafter named, and Marie Angélique Le Bon, paternal great-aunt of the said child, both adults and resident in the said Arras. They declared, in the absence of Guislain François Joseph Le Bon, representative of the people and father of the said child, that Marie Elizabeth Joséphe Regnez, his wife, gave birth yesterday at ten o'clock at her residence, the house called la Providence, section E, number 100, rue de l'Omoir, in the said Arras, to a boy whom they have named Emile Le Bon.—*Archives of the Ministry of Justice.*

<sup>2</sup> Emile Le Bon, *loc. cit.*

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the horrible Le Bon? So he contented himself with looking at her.

"At this moment," he writes, "I am looking at little Julie, who, almost naked and without either stockings or shoes, is creeping along in the garden, on all fours, and thus exercising herself, better than with a dancing master, in walking in an assured manner. She plays with the stones, the flies, and the dogs. Thinking that I am looking at Emile or Pauline, my eyes fill with tender tears."<sup>1</sup>

Or he paints his portrait, in which he is represented :

"Offering to someone a rose and strawberries with the device : *Si, dans un an* . . . The other side of the medallion bears, in addition to various embellishments, a monogram composed of these letters : J L—E R ; with a woman suckling a child and a little girl holding her by the skirt. You will tell me if you understand these emblems."<sup>2</sup>

From time to time almost remorseful words like the following escape from him : "Whether I am praised or excused or killed is all one to me. The past was beyond my control. May the country's evils never revive it!"<sup>3</sup>

Then follows the account of the terrible sittings when he appeared at the bar of the Convention, the hasty letters written from Amiens, where he was being tried, and finally his last epistle. He was to die in an hour's time, so he passed the whole of his life in review, stating that he knew it consisted of "a succession of virtuous actions, that the services that he had rendered were immortal, and that his children would not be long in receiving the gratitude of the nation. . . ." A short post-scriptum addressed to his young brother-in-law, who was hovering around the prison in tears, concluded the letter.

"I go to sleep weighed down by many sorrows . . . kiss my wife a thousand times for me! Tender Mimie, Pauline and Emile! . . . Take consolation! I send you a shirt, a handkerchief, a night-cap, the Act of the Constitution, two combs, my spoon and fork. I owe twenty francs to the jailer for my sheets and this you will pay him. Farewell to

<sup>1</sup> Emile Le Bon, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

all my friends and 'Long live the Republic!' Amiens, the 24th of Vendémiaire, the day on which Pauline is two years old." <sup>1</sup>

He dined as usual and drank, in two draughts, a pint of brandy. When, according to the terms of the judgment, he was clothed in the ignominious red robe of a parricide, he murmured, "Hand this garb to the Convention, whose orders I merely executed."

His last hour came. He took another drink of brandy, and whilst on his way from the prison to the Marché aux Herbes, the executioner was obliged to support him in order to prevent him from falling.<sup>2</sup> Was he intoxicated? So it has been said, yet he threw himself under the knife of the guillotine. . . . A howling crowd followed the body, when the executioner's assistant carried it away for burial, and on reaching the cemetery broke in and stoned the remains.

The site of his tomb was recognised forty years later by the heap of stones which filled it. On these being cleared away, a skeleton was found, the head of which was secured by an Amiens doctor. It now figures in a collection.<sup>3</sup>

On the following day a *huissier* appeared at the Providence prison at Arras and informed Madame Le Bon that she was free. Having made her things into a bundle, she came downstairs carrying little Emile and holding Pauline by the hand. Nobody spoke to her on the way. At the prison office she found her brother Abraham, who rushed towards her sobbing. It was thus that she learnt of her husband's death. The same day, accompanied by her brother and the two orphans, she took the Saint-Pol conveyance, and on arriving at her mother's in the evening shut herself up to weep. From that time she was no longer talked about. All that is known is that she was still at Saint-Pol in 1814, and that in that year, doubtless through fear of reprisals from the triumphal royalists, she left the Pas-de-Calais. It is believed, although there is no certainty about it, that she took refuge in a town in the east. Her son gives us to understand that she died in 1830. All trace of Pauline is lost.

<sup>1</sup> Emile Le Bon, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> P. J. Thénard.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Paris.

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Did she marry?—or did she die in childhood?—or did she hide herself with her mother, under another name, in a district far from the Artois? Everybody at Arras and Saint-Pol was in ignorance or said nothing. The civil registers are silent on these points, and the Archives are discreet. Léandre and Henri Le Bon, the brothers of the member of the Convention, and both of whom, like him, were married at Saint-Pol, had to change their name.<sup>1</sup> As to the mother, who never recovered from her madness, she died in the asylum in February 1795, at the time that her son was in the Luxembourg prison.

Henriette Le Bon, the youngest sister of the proconsul, remained alone and without means of existence. All her relatives were dead or in hiding; and although she was known to be tender, honest, and exceedingly pious, the name which she bore inspired such horror in Arras that she became an outcast whom no one dared either to employ or succour. How did her sorrowful situation become known to one of the former pupils of the Beaune oratory—that young Barthélemy Masson whose name I have already mentioned? It is supposed that this young man, who had retained an almost religious recollection of his relations with Père Le Bon, came to Arras at the close of the Terror to collect the materials for a rehabilitation of his old professor, and that thus he came to hear of Henriette's distress. He was twenty-three years of age, whilst she was twenty. But, whatever the circumstances of their meeting were, it is known for certain that he married her and settled down at Mons in Belgium, where he became a professor of literature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henri Le Bon married the daughter of Ferdinand Graux, hatter of Saint-Pol. He was employed as departmental secretary with a salary of twelve hundred livres, and on Sept. 21st, 1793, Lacoste and Pessard appointed him *commissaire des guerres*.

On the 16th of Nivôse, Year II., he was promoted to the post of manager of the National Hospital of Saint-Jean, with a salary of three thousand livres.

Léonard Le Bon, the younger brother of the member of the Convention, was, on Sept. 1st, 1790, Comptroller of Sales at Arras, in the place of his father. He was afterwards copying-clerk at the Arras *mairie*. Léonard married Angélique Régniez, the daughter of a bailiff of Saint-Pol, on Feb. 11th, 1793.

*Les Tribunaux Révolutionnaires d'Arras et de Cambrai*, by A. Paris.

<sup>2</sup> For details about Barthélemy Masson, see pp. 155, 161, 171, 175, and 179 of *Jouph Le Bon*, by Emile Le Bon.

## MIMIE

When Emile was five years of age, Barthélemy Masson had him brought to Mons and undertook his education. Little Le Bon thus grew up in the company of his very religious and charitable aunt and his father's most faithful friend and admirer. Whilst still a child he learnt that he was the son of a man "of expansive and inexhaustible goodness—of austere and simple virtue—and of exemplary tenderness and moderation." They did not hide from him that to the name of this pure hero "there remained attached, and as though synonymous, every idea of violence, ferocity, and depravity"; that "calumny and Macchiavellism had blighted his life"; and that the Convention, "after having invested him with boundless powers, had cowardly and illegally sacrificed him to Thermidorian anger."

To be the son of a monster and to adore that monster—to know that he bore a tarnished name and yet to glorify in that name, such was Emile Le Bon's mental position from the time when he first began to think. Barthélemy Masson died in Brussels in 1817, whilst Emile was in Paris completing his law studies. On December 31st of that year he obtained his licentiate's diploma, and six months later, on June 12th, 1818, he attended terms and was called to the bar.<sup>1</sup> He was a small-statured young man, rigidly austere as regards morals, silent and nervous, and, as someone wrote, "had the air of being elsewhere" in spirit. He was beset by Arras, by He was, in fact "elsewhere." He was beset by Arras, by that balcony on which his father and mother stood whilst the guillotine was at work in the square. . . . He had read and re-read Le Bon's trial and knew it by heart; and after perusing each page of that list of atrocities he had been able to say, "my father, that was my father." He really thought that it was all calumny, and he repeated to himself those words which had ruled his life, "woe to the vanquished, when the conquerors become their historians and judges!" He wondered by what means he could overthrow the impostors and re-establish the truth. His mother, whom he saw every year, and always in tears, handed him the letters written by her husband during the fourteen months'

<sup>1</sup> Archives of the Ministry of Justice.



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imprisonment preceding his sentence. She was no longer "Madame la représentante," but a poor woman filled with a tender recollection of the man whom she had loved. Her happy years were the cursed 1793 and 1794. The events of those days, blurred by the mist of time, doubtless appeared to her to be gracious and smiling. . . . All the same she must have had some strange recollections.

Whilst the Restoration lasted, Emile Le Bon held himself in, and prepared for future action. In 1832 he solicited employment and was appointed an examining magistrate at Chalon-sur-Saône. During his thirty-eight years' sojourn there, he became known to many of his contemporaries. He lived alone with a female servant, a veritable Cerberus, who so defended his door against inquisitive people, that nobody was ever known to have gained entrance. He was extremely demure and, since his small salary was almost his only resource, exceeding poor.<sup>1</sup> Not wishing to perpetuate "his ill-omened name," he had resolutely resolved to remain a bachelor. He was to be met in the town wearing a straw hat curiously ornamented with a tassel which hung down his back. He had many acquaintances but not a friend. Though on most occasions silent, he was seized at times, as in the case of timid people, with an inordinate desire for conversation; and he would then show an obliging eagerness verging on obsequiousness. One of his colleagues relates that, on Feb. 25th, 1848, whilst present, with other members of the tribunal, on the steps of the Palais de Justice at Chalon, at the proclamation of the new Government, he heard someone near him give a stifled sob, and on turning his head saw Le Bon, who, transfigured and quivering with enthusiasm, raised his cap with trembling hand and uttered a triumphal cry of "Long live the Republic!" Then, feeling that he had attracted his neighbour's attention, he made an effort and resumed his customary expression of honeyed resignation.

<sup>1</sup> The following notes were inserted in Emile Le Bon's *dossier* by one of his chiefs: "One thousand to twelve hundred francs income, morality excellent, mind well-informed but versatile, honourable, refined and esteemed. Great moral purity and amenity of character, more disposed to judge with his heart than his head, opinions very moderate, perfectly honest man, son of a famous Revolutionary."



A PRINT KNOWN AS "LES FORMES ACERBES" ISSUED AT THE TIME  
OF THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION AND SYMBOLIZING THE  
CRIMES OF JOSEPH LE BON.

*(In the possession of BARON DE VINC)*



However, a few months later, his chiefs had to calm his zeal, because, thinking that the past had returned, he extolled the benefits of a revolutionary Government with too much fire. He asked for advancement but it was refused. "I have never been told the reason for the rejection of my requests," he wrote to the minister; "and I have no need for it, no more than I have need to give it myself."

He had already, in 1845, published, in one volume, the *Lettres de Joseph Le Bon à sa femme*. In 1853 he completed it with *Quelques lettres de Joseph Le Bon antérieures à sa carrière politique*. But these two publications produced no sensation whatever. Two years later he printed a *Réfutation, article par article, du Rapport à la Convention nationale sur la mise en accusation de Joseph Le Bon*, a new pamphlet which was as little appreciated as the preceding works. This last, however, is curious, and it would be valuable to know where Emile Le Bon obtained the materials on which it is based. Perhaps they were transmitted to him by his mother in the form of recollections, or perhaps they were contained in a work drafted by Masson. This fact is certain, that at that time he was still unaware that his father's papers were preserved in the National Archives. It was not until 1858 that he heard of their existence there. Coming to Paris, it is believed for the first time, he settled himself down at the Archives and copied for a whole summer. His researches furnished material for a new volume entitled *Joseph Le Bon dans sa vie privée et dans sa carrière politique*. Although he made a plentiful distribution of this book, it had few readers, and was considered at the Chancellery "as an imprudent enterprise inspired by filial piety."<sup>1</sup> As soon as the author had reached the age limit, he was immediately pensioned off.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledging the receipt of a copy of the book, the First President of the Imperial Court of Dijon wrote to the author as follows: "I pay homage to the feeling of filial piety which presided over the production of this work. But, allow me to tell you, I do not consider your father's memory advanced by its publication, and it would have been preferable, in my opinion, had you abstained from it. I trust, sir, that you will consider my frankness as merely a fresh proof of the esteem and consideration in which I hold you."

<sup>2</sup> Dijon, Nov. 5th, 1864. Note by the First President of the Imperial Court: "Le Bon Emile, magistrate to the Civil Tribunal of Chalon since

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He lived at Chalon for some time longer. The reduction of his income prevented him undertaking any fresh publications, and he was hurt by the slight success of his literary efforts. He isolated himself more and more, and at last no longer showed himself in society, which, moreover, did not seek him out. He became very pious, and at morning Mass, in the church of Saint-Pierre, the faithful used to find him kneeling on the stones. People used to say to the children, who recollect having shuddered with fear: "Look, that is the son of a monster, whose evil deeds he is expiating." A little before the Franco-Prussian war he left Chalon and never appeared there again. It is believed that he died in 1870, but where is unknown.

Dec. 12th, 1832, was born on Nov. 7th, 1794. He has, therefore, reached the age limit fixed by the decree of March 1st, 1852. M. Le Bon bears his unfortunate name in such a manner as to oblige all who approach him to forget his origin in favour of his excellent qualities. He lives in a style according with his tastes and very small patrimony. His private life is most honourable; and because of his name, which he has not wished to transmit, he has remained a bachelor. . . ."

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In the days of *diligences*, when a traveller of modest means, who had been reduced to taking the public vehicle, arrived in Paris, he used to find in the courtyard of the coach-office in the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires a number of porters—a godsend for new arrivals—who for twenty *sous* withdrew his trunks, piled them upon their backs, and, after giving him the name of a furnished hotel, slowly conducted him to it amidst the hubbub of the streets. It was in this unpretentious manner that Joseph Fouché, who had recently been elected a deputy by the electors of the Loire-Inférieure, entered Paris during the closing days of September 1792. He was accompanied by his wife, whom he had married ten days before.<sup>1</sup> She was twenty-eight years of age. Her Christian names were Bonne Jeanne; the name of her family, Coiquaud. She was an ugly creature and skinny, with red hair and eyebrows and high cheek bones.

Who was she? No one knows, though she came without doubt of an honourable family, since her father, at the time of her marriage, was president of the Administration of the District of Nantes. It has been erroneously stated that she belonged to a religious order. Nothing is known about her childhood, her education, or those around her. Even when she became the wife of a prominent man, she was never spoken of. She passed through life without leaving any trace, without anybody noticing her, or thinking of inquiring

<sup>1</sup> He was married on Sept. '16th. See Louis Madelin's *Fouché*, 1759—1820, vol. i., p. 42.  
I need hardly say that all the works or documents I have consulted were quoted before me by M. Madelin in his excellent book. The only details I have collected are a few facts of merely anecdotal interest.

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about her. She is mentioned here and there in *Memoirs* and *Correspondance*, but that is all. When we follow her husband's life, step by step, we feel, however, that she is there, behind him: ever present, yet always invisible. Thus we can never draw but a dim portrait of her, as in the following study—a portrait similar to those first daguerreotypes, which gave but an indistinct image, a ghost-like transparency with heavy shadows.

The couple, who were very economical, although well-to-do, lived on the third floor of one of those narrow houses of the Rue Saint-Honoré which abutted against the Church of Saint Roch. Fouché was acquainted with the quarter, having lived for a year at the Oratory as a novice. He had often passed through Paris on the occasion of journeys to different houses of the Order at which he had lectured—journeys such as Niort to Arras, Arras to Juilly, and Juilly to Nantes. Moreover, many provincial deputies settled down in the neighbourhood of the Tuileries in order to be near the Assembly, which held its meetings in the *Manège*.

Fouché showed assiduity from the very first day. Not that he mounted into the Tribune, for his weak voice had no chance of being heard in the large shed-like building where the Convention was held, but that he attended regularly from early morning the meetings of the finance, liquidation, domains, and public instruction committees. He appeared at them like a conscientious workman, returning home for his meal with great punctuality. He was exceedingly sober, and most affectionate to his wife, who, having been *cunctate* from the beginning of the winter, now hardly left the house. Nothing, however, interested her apart from her household and her husband. Everything he said she considered was perfect, everything he did was good; and she shared his excessive opinions, not through mental indolence, but because of the love she bore him. This Breton woman, who had been properly brought up, expressed no astonishment when Fouché, meeting the wind which was blowing from the left, wrote in his *Réflexions sur l'éducation publique*, "all religious institutions and degraded men." Neither did she show any emotion when, on January 19th, 1793, he returned home after a long

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sitting and announced that he had voted for the death of the King, and that Louis XVI. would be condemned. Never were husband and wife more perfectly united. In the spring, Fouché left on a mission, and as neither he nor she could bear the idea of separation, Bonne Jeanne decided that, in spite of her condition, she would follow her husband. In June they were in Champagne and Bourgogne; at the end of July they left for the Nièvre, and took up their residence at the Hotel de la Nation at Nevers.

The metamorphosis was complete, the parsimony of the Rue Saint-Honoré being succeeded without transition by the apotheosis. The former Oratorian was received like a king, acclaimed and flattered by the people. He showed great generosity, spoke of his benevolence and sensibility, and inaugurated at Nevers an era of patriotic *fêtes* and ceremonies to which the whole district was invited. On August 10th, the anniversary of the fall of the royalty, Madame Fouché gave birth to a daughter, so her husband insisted that the whole town should share his joy. In the morning the constituted bodies, wearing their scarfs and plumes, proceeded to the Hôtel de la Nation to congratulate the happy father. The National Guard carried arms, whilst the band played its patriotic repertory beneath the lady's windows. Amidst the blowing of trumpets and the firing of salutes, the child was carried into the street, where a *cortège* was formed to accompany it to the Place de la Fédération, the site of the guillotine.<sup>1</sup> On the altar of *la Patrie*, which faced the scaffold, and in the presence of the entire population which had been attracted by this extraordinary spectacle, Citizen Damour, the godfather, and Citoyenne Champrobert, the godmother, presided over the civil baptism. The child received the name of Nièvre, and after being presented at the communal house was solemnly taken back to the Hôtel de la Nation escorted by the mirthful inhabitants, whilst patriots exchanged fraternal kisses and municipal cannon thundered on the banks of the Loire. If the bells were not rung it was because, by Fouché's order, they had been melted down two days before.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martel's *Étude sur Fouché et le communisme*.

<sup>2</sup> Martel.



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Thus did the Proconsul associate his wife with his glory. He loved her tenderly, consulted her often, and, "although she did not appear in public, made her play a large part in his life." "She is a model of her sex," he wrote. Very pure in his morals, he remained the faithful husband, the constant and devoted friend of their early married days. In spite of Bonne Jeanne's "horrible ugliness," he was as love-sick as one of Florian's shepherds, and he took care that people should know it. At the Brutus *fête*, on the Plain of Plagny, on September 12th, in honour of the inhabitants of Nevers, and the programme of which he himself drew up, love symbols were as plentiful as at those *fêtes galantes* given by Louis XIV. for Mlle. de la Vallière. It is true that the ceremony included, as a sensational item, the execution of three criminals; but in addition there were planted four poplars "on which were suspended the quiver, bow and bandage of Love." A temple to Cupid was raised in a little wood, and during the march past of the troops "each warrior had to present arms." There were also "Graces, Games, and Smiles," represented by children and young girls clothed in white and crowned with flowers. Fouché had hit on the idea of making people happy like himself by marrying these young people, on the spot, to patriotic conscripts. It is said that he himself was dressed "as a Pontiff of Nature, with a crown of fruit,"—which must have ill-accorded with his bilious, tragic face.

Malcontents—and there are always some—scoffingly relate that the *fête* ended badly, and that when the Proconsul invited the young patriots each to choose a companion amongst these modest virgins, the forty conscripts resolutely rushed towards a girl from Donzy whose father was a rich miller. The poor girl wept bitterly and would listen to nobody because she loved her cousin, the son of a farrier of Saint-Andoche and who was not present. A free fight taking place around her, the National Guard had to intervene.<sup>1</sup> Order having been re-established, the *fête* was continued by a

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is probably an invention of anti-revolutionary origin. But it is interesting to point out the manner in which revolutionaries, so ignorant at the impious ceremonies which they were obliged to witness, revenged themselves by means of mocking witticisms.

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banquet, at which Fouché was seen serving at the table for old and infirm men—a banquet so Spartan that the Plain of Plagny long retained the name of the Champ de la Fringale—the field of the hunger-fit.<sup>1</sup>

Bonne Jeanne's husband was such a happy married man that by a stroke of his pen he abolished ecclesiastical celibacy and forced every priest "either to marry within

<sup>1</sup> The style in which the programmes and official accounts of these *fêtes* was framed reads like a parody, as will be seen from the following extracts:

"About ten o'clock, the inflexible hand of Justice descended upon three criminals, the horror of Society. Thus, by means of the Terror, has she enabled friends to feel the sweet emotions of Nature and of holy Brotherhood more keenly. At one o'clock in the afternoon more agreeable feelings, and more appropriate ones for the human heart, had already replaced those produced by public indignation and horror of crime. The citizens of Nevers, united with their brothers of the Department, similar to those travellers who, having just glanced with terrified eyes into the frightful precipices of ancient *Ætna*, of the unfathomed *Taurus*, or of the menacing *Alps*, and who, having descended the slopes of those vast abysses, rest their delighted eyes on the smiling landscapes of Sicily or Switzerland—the citizens of Nevers experienced that delightful thrill which the soul feels but cannot communicate, the fortunate result of the conflict of opposite and varied sensations, a delicate and sublime feeling which proves, to the honour of the human race, that our hearts are made for virtue and that miscreants are degraded beings, cut off from the order in which nature placed them, and quite without the pale of her laws. What a charming spectacle! All the citizens carried in triumph the useful instruments which give life to the social body, and with them the bust of Brutus, majestically resting on Republican shoulders, surrounded by the thunder of nations. The representative of free and virtuous people, in the midst of a venerable *cortège* of the old, poor, and infirm, all crowned with wheat-ears, and all alleviated by his paternal care . . . &c., &c."

The programme of the *Civic fête in honour of Worth and Morality*, and which was drawn up by Citizen Fouché, is no less picturesque.

"Each division, before leaving the camp, will one after the other proceed towards the column of Liberty, the commander in a war-like attitude singing the first stanza of the hymn of Liberty. . . . He will then advance in respectful silence to the column, will sharpen his sword upon it, and, after a cry of Long live Liberty! will rejoin the *corps d'armée* to resume his customary position there. . . . Honourable vine-growers resting on barrels will be deputed to pour forth, for the fatigued warriors, and into the cup of Equality, the juice of the grape. . . . Then will the sacred fire, replenished by young girls, burn. Husbands and wives will take the Civic oath, added to that of eternal love, like *Philémon* and *Baucis*; and to seal this oath will be conducted to the temple of Love where they will embrace tenderly. There the representative of the people, the author of this domestic felicity, will deliver a speech . . . then the husbands and wives, Love, the people's representative, the public officer, the Graces, the Games, and the Smiles, will be led to a tent under which a frugal and Republican meal will be served to every citizen."—Martel.

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a month or adopt a child." He also occupied himself with less chimerical duties. He drained the whole country-side of its gold, sending to Paris waggon-loads of boxes filled with money and precious objects, such as bishops' crooks, fine gold lace, altar candlesticks, the doors of tabernacles, mitres, plate with armorial bearings, reliquaries, and finally the vermeil crown of the Dukes of Nevers, which, on being presented to the Convention, was broken at the foot of the Tribune by a member of that assembly.

Accompanied by his wife and little Nièvre, the Proconsul, on November 10th, arrived at Lyons, where he took barely an hour to find a residence. Immediately, he was to be seen in the streets of the town, with his right-hand man Collot and a band of ruffians, armed with clubs and axes, whom they were leading to the churches. There they seized the holy vessels, shattered crosses and statues, and carried away the spoils in triumph. In the *cortège* was an ass covered with a cope, wearing a mitre on its head, and carrying on its tail a crucifix and a Bible. At the Place des Terreaux a halt was made in order to light a bonfire, into which the sacred books were thrown, and to offer the ass, in the cathedral chalice, a feed of oats. Such was Fouché's *début*.<sup>1</sup>

The next day the member of the Convention placed the Terror—"the salutary Terror"—on the order of the day. On September 4th, between two parallel ditches, which were to serve as graves, sixty-four young men, who had been bound two by two, were cannonaded and hacked to pieces by balls, whilst Fouché looked on from a platform. Two hundred and nine others were shot at with grape at Brotteaux on the 15th, and as the guns, which had been aimed too near, had hardly done any execution, "the survivors were sabred, mutilated, and massacred with pikes, hatchets and pickaxes." Fouché serenely returned home in the evening to kiss Bonne Jeanne and make inquiries about little Nièvre, a weak and doleful child whose poor health filled his parents' hearts with anxiety. In his clear, nervous and rapid handwriting, he wrote to his

<sup>1</sup> J. B. M. Nohac's *Souvenirs des trois années de la Révolution à Lyon* 1841.

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colleagues of the Convention those famous letters which appear to reach the high-water mark of ferocity and sanguinary delirium. "Tears of joy stream from my eyes and inundate my soul," he said. . . . "This evening we are sending two hundred and thirteen rebels under fire."

Bonne Jeanne, to whom he doubtless communicated the reports which he sent to Paris, since we know that, by her own confession, "everything was in common between them, work, rest, and sleep," Bonne Jeanne, the only person of whom he took counsel, docilely approved of everything. He hardly ever left her. They were to be seen placidly walking arm in arm taking the air, through the streets of the town, which was paralysed by horror. Followed by Dacheux, Fouché's secretary, and a guard of a few patriots, they strolled to Brotteaux to see the pools of gory mud which stagnated on the ground, swollen, here and there, with graves full to overflowing.

One evening, when they were about to leave the house, a man appeared before them: a proscrip, an Oratorian, one of Fouché's friends of the seminary of Nantes—ex-père Mollet. Pursued, and unable to find a hiding-place, he had come to see his old colleague and make an appeal to him in the name of their former friendship.

"Don't worry yourself," replied Fouché.

As it was the hour for their usual walk, they took him with them. After crossing the bridge and on reaching Brotteaux, where the ground was cut up and covered with *débris*, and the willows were shattered by shot, Mollet's heart failed him. "He became uneasy, his legs trembled, he imagined that he could hear cries coming from beneath the earth, and he began to stammer." Bonne Jeanne, who walked about "as impassively as if she had been in a garden of roses," could not for the life of her understand their companion's emotion. Fouché shrugged his shoulders and said to her:

"Let him make faces and don't speak to him."

However, Mollet received a passport and was saved.<sup>1</sup>

Madame Fouché never pulled faces at anything. Whilst her husband, as at Nevers, was draining the district of Lyons

<sup>1</sup> J. B. M. Nollac.

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of gold, which was sent to Paris, she carried on her household most parsimoniously. As Fouché himself attests, they ate the commonest bread and drank only water. Yet, evidence has been found of rather suspicious requisitions, which were evidently made on his behalf, such as "two pieces of muslin, three dozen pairs of gloves, four dozen pairs of stockings and fifty pounds of coffee," in addition to "large pieces of silk for a woman's dress."<sup>1</sup> It is also related—and Barras mentions it in his *Memoirs*—that when Citoyenne Fouché was leaving Lyons, a few days before her husband, in a heavily-loaded berlin, the carriage unfortunately overturned in the suburb of Vaise. Witnesses of the accident noticed that the luggage had a strong resemblance to *spolia opima*, and that Bonne Jeanne, in a very flurried manner, tried to hide "her hoard" under her petticoats "like a fond hen covering up its chicks."

At their wretched lodging in the Rue Saint-Honoré, where they again took up their residence in April 1794, nothing, however, indicated wealth. The Vendée war had reduced the revenues of Fouché's property at Pellerin, near Nantes, to nil; he owed his tailor money, and, in short, the family, reduced to "indigence," had a difficulty in making ends meet, however economical it might be. There was no hope, either, of emerging from its difficulties, because Robespierre, who had become all-powerful and almost a deity, was displeased with the Lyons mission. Before the Revolution broke out, there existed between Robespierre and Fouché a feeling of rancour, owing to the fact that the latter had lent money to the ruined Arras lawyer, whose exasperated pride was hurt by this recollection. Fouché felt as near the guillotine as if he were already in a tumbrel; he was dogged by a spy, and was forced to wander about Paris, hiding where he could. During this period of distress, the loving husband and father dominated, and in the face of all prudence he dared to return to the Rue Saint-Honoré where little Nièvre was dying. This was still his greatest trouble. "Our poor little girl is still in an alarming condition, yet we still have

<sup>1</sup> Buchez and Roux's *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française*, and Martel's *Étude sur Fouché*.

hope, and with great care we shall save her"—he says in a letter of the 3rd of Thermidor. On the 5th, however, the child was worse. In addition to this, Fouché had "domestic troubles." His sister, Mme. Broband, had sent him from Brittany, to help Bonne Jeanne, a servant—a sort of nurse—who "had all the most detestable faults, since she loved wine and men!" A *coup d'état* was necessary, so Fouché occupied himself with her return home—and put her out of doors. "I have given her 135 francs, and I tell you this so that you will not be duped by her and will refuse all her demands." Whilst bothering himself with all these household details his neck was under the knife. He knew that he would be dead within ten days unless Robespierre was overthrown, and, as he wished to live for his wife and little one, he accepted the struggle cunningly—without friends, without influence, and without apparent chance of success. . . . Only one singular episode of this fierce, extraordinary, and heroic duel need be mentioned here. Amongst the various little plans adopted by Fouché, was the pretence of falling in love with Robespierre's sister. Was she unaware that he was married? That is very improbable. Yet she declared "that he sought her hand." She met him in the Champs-Élysées, and, sitting down on a bench together, they talked. What was the subject of their conversation? <sup>1</sup> What could

<sup>1</sup> "Since the beginning of the Revolution, Fouché had shown the most ardent patriotism and the most holy devotion. My brother, who believed that he was sincere, accorded him his friendship and esteem. He spoke of him to me as a tried democrat, and even introduced him to me with words of eulogy and a request that I should hold him in honour. After this introduction, Fouché was assiduous in his visits and showed me such attentions as are paid to a person in whom one takes a particular interest.

"Fouché was not good-looking, but he had a charming mind and was extremely amiable. He spoke to me of marriage, and I must confess that, feeling no repugnance at the idea, I was rather disposed to accord my hand to the man whom my brother had introduced as a pure democrat and his friend. I replied to his proposal by saying that I should like to consult my brother and think the matter over, and that I should like a little time in order to come to a decision. I did indeed speak to Robespierre, who made no opposition to my union with Fouché.

"From that day (that on which he returned from Lyons) Fouché was my brother's most irreconcilable enemy. . . . He never again entered my door, but I sometimes met him in the Champs-Élysées, where I used to go for a walk almost daily. He came up to me as though nothing had happened between my brother and him. . . . I have been slandered in connection with this man: people have dared to say that I was his

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have been during that terrible summer of Year II., with the guillotine but a few steps away, the topics upon which the slaughterer of Lyons and the sister of the two Robespierres conversed? What could have been the compliments exchanged between this puny and sickly proscrip—this man “prematurely worn out,” with pallid face and “bloodshot” eyes, and who was careless of his personal appearance—and this peevish, pretentious woman? This is one of those mysterious comedies with which the history of the Revolution bristles—a comedy which later had its sequel in the pension which the Duc d’Otrante, as long as he was in power, paid to the woman who, in Thermidor, had been either his accomplice or his dupe.

Fouché triumphed, but only escaped with his life. Having become a reprobate in the eyes of Thermidorian reactionaries, he saw his name, in the history of the Terror, placed in the same category as those of Carrier and Le Bon, and it was by a miracle of cunning and intrigue that he escaped the “redeeming scaffold.” These were the only hours of his whole life in which he felt conquered and in despair—not on account of the wreck of his political fortunes but because Nièvre had just died. Bonne Jeanne was inconsolable; whilst he, the author of so much mourning, revolted against Nature. “As barbarous as a tyrant,” he wrote with superb unconsciousness, “she kills my children.”<sup>1</sup>

Is it really possible that, in those days of sorrow, the mother’s thoughts did not wander to that Plaine des Brotteaux where so many young bodies were rotting, and where she had formerly strolled with the same heedlessness as if she had been walking “in a garden of roses”?

But never is there a sign of remorse or even a thought of the past. Fouché, who was determined to be a father, was presented by his wife with a second child, “a worthy product of this hideous couple,” says Barras, a child “no less red-haired

mistress before and after the ninth of Thermidor, but it is an abominable calumny. Never did Fouché show me anything but the greatest respect, and had he, in his conversations, used any words tending to make me forget my duty, I should have instantly dismissed him from my presence.”—*Memoirs of Charlotte Robespierre.*

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, A.F. II., 47.

than its parents, a veritable Albinos," every bit as sickly as its predecessor. Father and mother adored it.

On the dissolution of the Convention, Fouché became a nonentity. It was necessary, however, for him to maintain his wife and child, or, as he called them, "his she-wolf and cub." So he became a pig merchant. In partnership with another ex-member of the Convention, named Gérard, he hoped, by means of a certain method of forced feeding, "to fatten swine very rapidly, and, after having stuffed them for a week, to sell them at double their cost price." The speculation failed; the ex-Oratorian, at the end of his resources, next tried detective work, but, as he was known and suspected by everybody, his household this time came utterly to grief. On December 31st, 1795, he sought exile at Saint-Leu, in the valley of Montmorency. There he passed the winter near the cot of his child, who, ever ailing, died in June. "I have just lost," he wrote, "the only child who remained to console me for the injustice and wickedness of man. It is therefore ordained that I should eternally weep!"<sup>1</sup> Soon a third child was born to him—and died like the others. Had these private catastrophes been noised abroad, many a mother in Lyons might have imagined that some invisible power was avenging her!

Were these three innocent victims a sufficient expiation? A sudden turn in the tide took place in Fouché's life at the beginning of 1797. The former member of the Convention made *amende honorable* to all parties, solicited the pardon of Louis XVI.'s brother, obtained from the Government a share in the army contracts, and was appointed legate of the Directory at Milan. Decidedly in luck's way, Fouché set out, ever accompanied by his faithful wife, who had become still uglier and more sullen than ever—an Italian called her *brutta*—but who was also still more loving and assiduous in her wifely duties. A fourth child was born, Joseph Liberté, and gave promise of living. From Milan they went to The Hague. Bonne Jeanne Coiquaud was now Ambassadress of France. She held her rank modestly, in accordance with one of her husband's precepts—that husband whom she admired

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, A.F. II, 47.



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and followed blindly: "Great reserve in speech and severity in bearing." This rude task of "a virtuous woman" was greatly facilitated by her ugliness. Nobody was more circumspect, more reflective, or more discreet than she. If some woman-compatriot asked a favour of her, she transmitted the request to the offices through the official channel, without the addition of any recommendatory note. Madame Fouché is so dim a figure that one might imagine she was either without intelligence, or apathetic, did we not know that she shared in all her husband's work, knew all his secrets, gave him advice, and influenced him continually. Their one desire was to establish a family and become rich. Everything was subordinated to this idea, and even ambition was merely a means of attaining it. They applied themselves to the task with a haste resembling greediness, as on that day when, leaving the Milan Legation, they carried off, as a souvenir of their ephemeral good fortune, the carriage, the horses, the linen, and a quantity of other objects belonging to the Embassy.

He possessed that tender and obstinate love for home which is a characteristic of all those who had escaped from the cloister, and he remained so much in love with "his ugly creature" that even when he was an all-powerful minister, Paris dared to smile. As to his children—and there were four<sup>1</sup> of them living in 1803—they were his pride, his happiness, and "the charm of his life."

In the days of their splendour, the Hôtel de Juigné, on the Quai Malaquais, was the palace occupied by the ex-Oratorian and Bonne Jeanne. This mansion, the headquarters of the police, was the dreadful ante-chamber through which accused passed whilst on their way to those hells called the Temple,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Etienne Jean, married in — to N. Colin de Sussy, died without issue on Dec. 31st, 1862, at the age of sixty-six.

Armand, died a bachelor, at Stockholm, on Nov. 25th, 1878.

Athanase was married to — and had three children, the eldest of whom, Gustave, Duc d'Otrante, was a general in the Swedish army.

Joséphine Armande was married to Comte de Therner, and was the mother of Madame de Castelbajac and Madame de Saint-Roman.—*Recherches Historiques sur la Commune du Pellerin*, by Weillechêze.

During the Restoration the movements of Fouché's sons were to a certain extent followed by the police. See a few reports in the *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6549, and F<sup>7</sup>, 6902.

the Donjon of Vincennes, the Fort of Joux, the Château of Ham, the Conciergerie, the Grève, and the Plain of Grenelle. It was the fateful spot where, in the dark offices which stretched from the Rue des Augustins to the Rue des Saints-Pères, and which communicated with the minister's house by means of wooden passages, there were collected the mysterious *dossiers* of everybody who had a name in Europe—a fantastic accumulation of notes and information which, although much reduced to-day owing to destruction and removals, still discourages the most persevering keepers of records. It was there that there daily poured in the reports of that multitude of spies which the popular imagination still further magnified, and where everybody rubbed shoulders: Robespierre's ex-detectives, penniless Chouans, duchesses, valets, noble lords, croupiers, prostitutes, ex-members of the Convention, and even the Empress herself. Everyone spied on everyone else. Six people in France, only six, escaped being spied upon—or at least so people thought—Fouché, his wife, and their four children.

The ex-Terrorist who had organised this frightful "governing machine" was more powerful than Napoleon himself. He was a duke, rich to the amount of twenty millions, and owned extensive estates in the Brie, in Provence, and in Italy. Yet nothing had changed in his household life. Bonne Jeanne had put her house "on a middle-class footing of from 15 to 20 thousand francs income." Apart from gala days, when the minister was obliged to wear his blue velvet coat, stiff with gold embroidery, and a squadron had to gallop around his carriage, he was always dressed in an old, dark, and badly cut frock-coat. He rose early, made his toilette rapidly—it is said too rapidly—and went down to his office. Of all the employees at the ministry, he was the first and last at work. Excepting Wednesday, the official reception day, the family spent the evening together. The Duchess would not consent to leave her children, and would only show herself in their presence. An aged relative, her daughter's governess, a well-mannered, intelligent person, some old Oratorians, Fouché's secretary, Maillocheau, and Jay, his son's tutor, were the only guests.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Madame de Chastenay.*

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They played *bélique* or danced: the four children, Joseph, Armand, Athénas, and Joséphine ran about the room: and they "made jokes with them which made the father laugh until tears ran down his face," for this man "of ice," whose portraits show him as a thin, frightfully pallid being with colourless hair and eyebrows, and the impassibility of a statue, was, when at home, gay, full of animation, playful, and especially talkative—talkative to the point of fatiguing his listeners. He did not keep still for a moment, drew near to the players, made them cheat, amused himself by upsetting the game, and, when ten o'clock arrived, retired for the night with his wife and boys. All five slept in the same room. It was Bonne Jeanne who made this rule. She was as jealous of her husband "as though he were only twenty years of age": and he himself was very satisfied, since he did not hide the fact that he loved his wife, "whose enlightened mind and rare virtues" he praised to everybody. To the ordinary family circle there was sometimes added a few private friends, including Madame de Chastenay and the Princess de Vandémont. On those days there was music, and actresses were invited, such as Madame Drot, Madame Saint-Aubin, and Mlle. Armand. There was also often present in this singular company Cardinal de Belloy, Archbishop of Paris, whose robust old age prompted a remark in 1807 from the Emperor. "M. de Belloy," said Napoleon, "you will die a centenarian." "Why does your Majesty," replied the prelate, a little vexed, "wish that I should live only two years longer?" When the Archbishop, who was ever cheerful, lively and benevolent, entered the house of the Minister of Police, he was received "with as much tenderness as respect." The days were far distant when Fouché had served oats to asses in golden chalices. Bonne Jeanne had again become the pious Breton of former times: and she never missed placing her four children, all of whom had been baptised in a more orthodox way than little Nièvre, in a row before the Archbishop, whom she begged would some day bless her daughter's marriage. Ever in community of feelings and opinions with his wife, Fouché had also changed since the Pagan fêtes of Nevers, and he now

: Madame de Chastenay.

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attributed his superiority "to the recollection of the morals of the Bible."

At Aix, the seat of his senatorship, and to which he withdrew after his disgrace in 1810, he retained his apparent serenity and simplicity of life, although on great occasions he displayed the pomp of a powerful lord. The exiled couple, who had at first been received with suspicion by the Royalist nobility of the district, where the Lyons Terror was still remembered, soon conquered the most refractory families. A princely house, that of the Castellane-Majastras, opened its doors to them. It was there that Fouché saw for the first time a young girl of twenty-three, Gabrielle de Castellane, who was pretty, witty, graceful and poor—"the object of admiration of all about her." Certainly there is nothing to lead us to believe that from the commencement this child fascinated him, nor that the impassive face of the ex-minister revealed anything of the pleasure that he felt as he saw her dancing. However that may be, it is a fact that as soon as this beautiful aristocrat appeared on the scene, Bonne Jeanne, who formed such a singular contrast to this adulated and brilliant young girl, appeared to efface herself still more!

After a year's penance at Aix, the Emperor authorised Fouché's return to Ferrières, so the Duke, who had formed this estate into a princely domain, settled down there. His wife was ill. Nothing more is known than that, except that she showed herself very charitable (the curé of the village was instructed to scatter their alms broadcast), and that she died on October 9th, 1812, at the age of forty-eight years. "I am much to be pitied," wrote Fouché a month later, "since I have had the misfortune to lose the one who shared my life. My work, readings, walks, sleep, everything was in common with her; and this sweet and happy communion has just been terminated by the most frightful rupture."

Bonne Jeanne Coiquaud, Duchesse d'Otrante, was interred in the little cemetery at Ferrières. Less than three years later, Fouché, with ducal mantle over his shoulders, married Gabrielle de Castellane, "whose ancestors had formerly reigned, as sovereign princes, in the valley of the Rhone." Louis XVIII., King of France, signed the regicide's marriage

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contract. Fouché on that day must have thought a good deal of poor Bonne Jeanne who had so docilely and blindly loved him, and a little also, perhaps, of that ducal crown which he had formerly taken from the Treasury of Nevers and sent to the Convention to be destroyed there as a bauble unworthy of the sight of regenerated Frenchmen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fouché's body was taken to the Ferrières cemetery and buried by the side of Bonne Jeanne Coiquaud on June 22nd, 1875.—Veillechêze.

## THE LAST DAYS OF SANTERRE

THERE was recently pulled down in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, not far from the Rue de Reuilly, a certain ancient building with two long rows of windows, a red-tiled roof, and a rather low door. Though without any well-marked characteristics, it was the house formerly occupied by Santerre whose brewery still exists, with its sign of the *Hortensia*, at 9 Rue de Reuilly. One experienced a vague, irrational, and rather stupid feeling of regret on seeing this building fall, as though it were a witness, who had not said everything, that had disappeared. Still solid, though grey with age, this gloomy pile resembled those sullen old women who still have pretensions to youth, and whom you suspect of having once been overgay.

What events this house had seen in its youth ! The eight hundred thousand inhabitants of Paris, increased by vine-growers from Charonne, market-gardeners from Bagnolet, quarrymen from Montrouge, and washerwomen from the Bièvre, visited it on July 15th, 1789, in a state of delirious fraternisation.

There was being driven about the faubourg, in a fine carriage and seated between two French guards, "a spectre who had been released the evening before from the Bastille." The man, who had to be supported, appeared to be somnolent, and his face was as white as the cottony beard which reached to his knees. A costumier with a sense of the picturesque had hastily tricked him out in a long grey blouse, drawn in at the waist by a cord. On being taken out of prison, he had told those who asked him his name that he was called the "Major de l'immensité." The people contemplated this apparition

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with intense veneration, pity, and curiosity, with which was mingled, nevertheless, indignation and anger. The phantom seemed, however, to be insensible to the shouts, the heat of the sun, and the joy of the people; and, as the vehicle jolted along, his livid head rolled from one shoulder to the other, like that of a dead man. In the evening, and because they feared to kill him by prolonging his triumph, he was taken to Santerre's, where another prisoner, also discovered in the Bastille, was already being sheltered. The entire faubourg was illuminated. The *Hortensia* brewery, especially, was brilliant with strings of lanterns. Every door and window was open, and there was the sound of applause, kissing, and clinking of glasses. An immense multitude, immobile on account of its compactness, stood enraptured in front of the house, everyone stamping, pushing, and raising himself on tiptoe to see what was going on. We can imagine what legends sprang up amongst this crowd, its credulity excited by this extraordinary and romantic occurrence.

Under the guard of the excited faubourg, the prisoners passed the night at Santerre's. At dawn the people had to recognise that the "Major de l'immensité," whose real name was Jacques François Xavier de Whyte de Malleville, was mad, so they sent him to the Hospice des Ménages. His companion was a man named Tavernier, who had passed from one State prison to another since 1746—a period of 43 years. He was, however, a very bad character. Since he also had fallen into second childhood, he was sent to Charenton.

Santerre's house became a sacred spot in consequence of the sojourn of these two victims of tyranny, and he himself acquired a halo of glory. He was then a strong fellow of thirty-seven years of age, as full-blown and fresh as the flower of his signboard. He was almost a child of the quarter, for, born in the Rue Censier, in the parish of Saint-Médard, he had bought in 1792, when twenty years of age, the *Hortensia* brewery, the importance of which had been increased tenfold, thanks to his activity and plain dealing. His red beer was celebrated far and wide. All Paris knew the strength and fine appearance of his dray-horses, one of which, the *Sans Pareil* was of such gigantic proportions that its owner lent it

## THE LAST DAYS OF SANTERRE

every year to a poor man of the neighbourhood for exhibition at the fair, disguised as an elephant.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the stalwart brewer had the reputation of being an intrepid horseman. Franconi, the Duke of Orleans, and himself were considered in 1789 to be the "kings of horsemanship."

In addition to this, the entire quarter, which retained the familiar cohesion of a provincial town, had been interested in his love idyll with the charming daughter of François, the brewer, who had refused to allow him his daughter's hand. Santerre had wished to die, but had been prevented from committing suicide by someone seizing him by the leg just as he was stepping over the parapet of the Pont de la Tournelle. On the other hand, Mlle. François had fallen into such a state of languor through despair that her parents, at the advice of the doctor, gave way. The newly-married couple made so pleasing a pair that the people assembled to look at them when they went for a walk on a Sunday in the Jardin du Roi. But their happiness was short-lived, for pretty Madame Santerre died after a year of married life.

Santerre remained a widower for five years. In 1778 he married a Mlle. Deleinte, the daughter of a rich jeweller of the Rue Bourg l'Abbé, who, having pretensions to the nobility, had bought the domain of Arcueil and hoped to found an aristocratic house. He had applied himself to this task with so much energy that he had twenty-six daughters and not a son.<sup>2</sup> Everything is hyperbolic in this history. She who Santerre had married was the twenty-sixth daughter, a rather unattractive girl, who was convinced that she had married beneath her by forming an alliance with a brewer. She bore him three sons, but she was as indifferent a mother as she was cross-grained a wife.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Santerre, général de la République Française*, by A. Carro, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> "The Deleinte family was composed of father, mother, and six daughters, the survivors of twenty-six who were *born successively*."—A. Carro.

<sup>3</sup> "Three or four days after Santerre's marriage his wife made the tardy and cruel confession that she did not love him, and that she would like to have married another. Santerre's unheard-of efforts to soften her rather difficult character met with but small success. Never did he find again that domestic happiness which he had lost almost as soon as it was within his grasp."—A. Carro.



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Twenty-five sisters-in-law, a wonderful horse, and quantities of excellent beer—of which he was by no means sparing—were enough to make any man popular. At the beginning of the Revolution, Santerre was so known and loved in the districts extending from the Bastille to the Place du Trône, and from Bercy to Ménilmontant that glory suddenly came to him without him seeking it. He did not put in an appearance at the assault of the Bastille, but wisely contented himself by sending his horses to lead the straw which was used for setting fire to the draw-bridges.<sup>1</sup> Yet, when the fortress was captured, it was to him that the conquerors triumphantly bore the keys of the towers and the chains taken from the prisoners! Perhaps, after that warm day's work, it was the famous red beer which attracted the heated patriots to the *Hortensia*! The same day, in the Église des Enfants Trouvés, Santerre was acclaimed commander of the burgher guard of the district, and on August 29th the ballot confirmed his appointment to this rank by 332 out of 417 votes.<sup>2</sup>

All his misfortunes dated from that day. The company of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine had the most handsome captain in Paris, but the *Hortensia* brewery had lost its master. Santerre put in an appearance everywhere: at Versailles, at the Champ de Mars, and at the Tuileries when the guard was being relieved. Elegant in his smart uniform, the cynosure of every eye, and almost famous, he had become the pride and the "father of the faubourg." When the winter of 1792 came, he bought up all the rice he could find and "flocks of sheep," and, after transforming his brewing boilers into stewpots, prepared enormous stews for the poor. His workmen were employed in this work "day and night," and everyone who came took away a plentiful and steaming portion. Santerre thus distributed "150,000 francs' worth of

<sup>1</sup> "I was a witness of the intrigue in the Assemblies which were called together for the purpose of rewarding the true conquerors of the Bastille. . . . Especially did Santerre wish to be received, and he employed every means in his power to that end. He stated that he had lent his horses to draw the cartloads of manure which were there. I made this reply to him, 'Well, then, we must receive Santerre's horses, since they were really there, but not him, since not one of us saw him.'"—*La vie véritable du Citoyen Jean Ronsin*, published by Victor Barrucand, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of War. Dossier Santerre.*

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ragout." How he was beloved for this! He could do what he liked with the people. On the other hand, patriots looked upon the *Hortensia*, where beer flowed gratuitously, as belonging to the faubourg. On August 10th its owner was promoted to the rank of General of the National Parisian Guard, in succession to Mandat, who had been massacred and thrown into the Seine. And thus it came about that it was Santerre who led Louis XVI. to the Temple, and he also who, on January 21st, escorted the king from the prison to the scaffold.

By way of the boulevards, lined with a quadruple guard of troops, the *cortège*, preceded by batteries of guns, passed with grave step. Drums rolled and trumpets sounded, and this noise rendered the great silence of the stupefied and disconcerted crowd still more striking. Preceding Louis' green carriage, through the moisture-covered windows of which there could be distinguished but the dim silhouette of a hat with turned-down brim, Santerre, stiffly and proudly mounted on one of his fine horses, dominated the crowd with his handsome figure and gesticulated with his naked sword like a god appeasing tempests.

In the evening the general appeared at the Temple with some officers and sat down to supper with the commissaries on duty. The meal was a mournful one, because of the presence of the king's *valet de chambre*, Cléry, who was still weeping, and of the proximity of the widow and orphans, who were sitting up on an upper floor. Without showing satisfaction, but in a very off-hand manner, Santerre gave his version of the morning's proceeding.<sup>1</sup> More than once during the journey he had stopped the carriage "to inquire if the condemned man had anything to ask." Opposite the door

<sup>1</sup> "They came to fetch me to take supper. Not wishing to leave Cléry alone, I advised him to come with me, but it was only with great difficulty that I could get him to do so. He sat in front of me at table, but would take very little. General Santerre and some officers of his staff arrived and also sat down to table. The former then began to relate with unparalleled coolness how the execution had gone off, without omitting to mention a single circumstance—not even that of the beating of drums which he had ordered when the king wished to speak to the people. He added that the executioner appeared to be undecided and that he had said to him, 'Do your duty.'"—Testimony of a municipal soldier, Charles Goret, on duty at the Temple Jan. 21st, 1793.

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of the Ministry of Marine, he ordered a halt to be made, and, "once more approaching the carriage door, asked *if he had anything to write or to say and if he wished to speak*. He replied in the negative."

Santerre also related that "when they were at the foot of the scaffold the king asked to be allowed to pray alone and remain in his carriage, and that after a lapse of five minutes he got out without assistance." At this moment the executioner seized him, and said, "Monsieur, leave your coat." "No," replied Louis. "You must leave your coat," repeated the executioner, "otherwise I will not operate," "I don't wish it," sharply replied the king. At this the executioner and his assistants tried to remove the garment by force. "Very well, then," said the condemned man, "leave me alone and I will take it off myself." He then unfastened his collar, threw it to the ground, and removed his coat. The executioner, Charles Henri Sanson, who on that day wished to carry out his duties in person—it was the first time that he had done so during the forty years that he had held his post—was armed with swords and pistols. Seizing Louis' hands and attaching them behind his back, he drew forth his scissors and rapidly cut off his hair. The king trembled . . . When on the scaffold he began to speak to the people. A few cries of "Mercy!" came from the crowd. Santerre immediately brandished his sword, whereupon the drums, "which were in the centre," began to beat and the words were drowned.<sup>1</sup>

At this the king stamped his feet and shouted to them to stop, whilst the general's aides-de-camp pressed the hesitating executioner to "do his duty." One of them, named Richard, seized a pistol and pointed it at him. The executioner and his assistants then dragged Louis towards them and bound him. "The king continued to speak animatedly, but on account of the drums nothing could be heard, unless it was a dreadful cry which the fall of the knife cut short. . . ."

General Berruyer, who was that day the commander-in-

<sup>1</sup> These are the details given by Santerre himself to Mercier du Rocher, who set them down in his *Memoirs*. See Chassin's *Préparation à la Guerre de Vendée*.

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chief, later claimed the responsibility for this famous beating of drums. In reality, Santerre merely transmitted his order, and his claim to "the glory" of it was but a boast. Through a desire to thrust himself forward, the stupid fellow retained through life the opprobrium of this act. He had been known as "handsome Santerre." After October he was called "fiery Santerre"; after August 10th, "terrible Santerre"; and on January 21st, in consequence of his bragging, he became "infamous Santerre."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, eminently self-satisfied, he continued to strut about, and when appointed successively major-general and general of division, he was in no way astonished at his prodigious good fortune.

When he looked at himself in his fine National uniform—his chest swelling out under white cashmere revers, his broad shoulders fringed with gold, his legs showing to advantage in their tight-fitting leather breeches, and red plumes waving above his head—he imagined that he was the equal of the most famous generals. Had he not, like them, courage, a strong voice, fine horses, and strategical ideas? For he firmly believed in the efficacy of his artless conceptions, and already pictured himself as the conqueror of the enemies of the Republic. His tactics, which he revealed to the Committee of General Safety on March 23rd, 1793, were simplicity itself. He proposed to mobilise all the vehicles on which they could lay their hands, to fill them with 20,000 Parisians, and to drive them at full gallop into the insurrectionist western provinces. There "they would seize the priests, nobles, and other scoundrels, they would speak to the good agriculturists the language of reason and fraternity," and as soon as calm was re-established they would triumphantly return to Paris. Two months later he had perfected his plan of campaign—namely, "to send against the Chouans 100,000 men and 80 pieces of cannon." As soon as Paris had shown herself "the civil war would be at an end." He asked for only a week, including the time for the journey, in which

<sup>1</sup> The famous beating of drums has been the subject of much discussion, but it is now practically certain that it was General Berruyer who ordered Santerre to have it done. See the *Quotidienne* for Jan. 27th, 1827.

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“to exterminate the rebels.” After conquering them, this army of 100,000 men “could easily cross over to the British Isles and make an appeal to the English people.” Such was the bold project “which he had himself conceived” and which—without making any mystery about it—he unfolded on May 13th, at the bar of the Convention.<sup>1</sup>

Those terrible members of the Convention, who, like all giants, were simple-minded, listened to the brewer without a smile. There were some of them even who took him seriously, since on May 18th he received his *lettres de service* for the Army of the West. Three days later, at Orleans, he set to work, at the head of a numerous staff, with new helmets, to pass in review “the multitude” of Parisian recruits. But instead of there being 100,000 men there were only 168, and they had only been able to requisition a couple of vehicles. Others, however, were to follow, although those who had consented to enlist, on receiving from the Commune a fee of 200 livres, refused to leave the suburbs as soon as they had passed through the gates. But what matter? A large number of Parisians were already in the army, and as more than 10,000 volunteers occupied Saumur, Santerre rushed “to put himself at their head.” He arrived there on June 9th, parading, caracoling, shaking outstretched hands, and haranguing his brave men. Suddenly, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Chouans—as though they had been merely waiting for Santerre's arrival—attacked the *château*. The entire royal army was there, attacking the gates and taking the redoubts by assault. The town was besieged, the Blues with their officers were utterly taken by surprise, and disorder was complete. Before nightfall Saumur was in the hands of the rebels. Santerre had the good luck to save the army's money chest, which served as a pretext for “running away as fast as his legs would carry him,” pursued by La Rochejacquelin, whom he succeeded in tiring out. Eight thousand national volunteers were captured by the Chouans, who set them at liberty, however, after they had shaved their

<sup>1</sup> Chassin's *Études documentaires sur la Vendée et la Chouannerie*. See the *Table générale*.

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heads and made them swear "that they would no longer fight against Religion and the King."<sup>1</sup>

This was not a happy beginning. But where is the general who has not been defeated? Santerre resolved that he would take a triumphal revenge. The occasion presented itself on September 18th, on the eve of which day his division, which had set out from Vihiers, in the Maine-et-Loire, was marching on Vezins and Chollet. There were 6,500 regulars and 8,000 to 10,000 volunteers,—a ragged multitude armed with pikes, rusty swords, espadons, and guns that were out of date. On their feet were sabots and they were clothed with second-hand effects from the old-clothes shops in the Rue Tirechappe: carmagnoles, guardsmen's old uniforms, dragoons' helmets without either leather or horsehair, straw hats in which pipes and spoons were unblushingly stuck, buttonless waistcoats and breeches full of holes. Bare-breasted, heedless, fault-finding, and heroic they marched along, ready to die without a murmur, but refractory to all discipline. Four hundred women followed in the wake of a single battalion. They drank and sang and kept themselves warm; they stopped to rest in the shade, and they danced around the camp fires. Such was Santerre's army. On September 18th, *réveille* was sounded at five o'clock in the morning, but it was nine o'clock before the brandy had been served out and the men were in a humour to march. In single column and without scouts they advanced. At noon they arrived at Coron, a village in a hollow, the only street of which formed a defile into which the artillery, consisting of eight pieces, entered. Suddenly, an army of sturdy fellows sprang from the hedges, gardens, ditches, thickets, houses, and vineyards. In a moment they numbered 20,000,—hurled *en masse*. Two ammunition waggons, which the terrified Blues precipitately attempted to turn round, obstructed the very narrow street, whereupon there was such instantaneous disorder that barely a few shots were fired. The Chouans, impetuously carried forward, stumbled amongst the sabots and pikes which the

<sup>1</sup> Chassin's *La Vendée Patriote*, vol. iii.

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volunteers, in order to flee more quickly, had thrown aside. The astounded Santerre, who had never given either an order or attempted to rally his men, made off at full speed towards Saumur on his best horse, losing his artillery, a large number of arms, and all his prestige.<sup>1</sup>

"The general has not displayed great talent," wrote the much astonished Choudieu. On the other hand, the "General" learnt that his mere name inspired such great terror amongst the insurgents that they had forged an iron cage, with the intention, if they captured him, of shutting him up in it and burning him alive. This indirect homage to his valour and reputation somewhat comforted him. At bottom, however, he was mortified, and being a man who could not do without applause, he began to regret the glorious days of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. He became embittered by the rueful and disappointed faces which were no longer hidden at headquarters, so on October 4th he left the army and on the 7th returned to Paris in a post-chaise and four horses.

As soon as he had crossed the Place de la Bastille and was rolling over the paving-stones of his faubourg,—as soon as the people in the street saw him, sitting in a fine carriage, in which he doubtless made no attempt to hide himself, with his general's scarf, his tricolour plumes, and his high embroidered collar enframing his fresh cheeks, an immense cry arose: "It is he! It is Santerre!" The happy news spread from house to house and from workshop to workshop. Patriots poured into the streets from all sides. They stopped the horses amidst shouts of "Long live the general! Long live our *gros père*!"<sup>2</sup> The wide street of the quarter was obstructed. They carried him in triumph to his house. Those who saw him wished to speak to him, and those who had spoken to him wished to touch him, to shake his hand and embrace him. He was dying with fatigue and hunger and emotion and joy, but how could he escape his admirers? On sitting down to table a procession was organised. Piously the crowd entered by the door opening on to the faubourg

<sup>1</sup> Chassin's *La Vendée Patriote*.

<sup>2</sup> A. Carro's *Santerre, général de la République Française*.

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and passed in front of the hero, who, in full dress, with sword by side and hat on head, received their familiar homage with that good-natured smile which won all hearts. The people left the house by way of the courtyard of the Rue de Reuilly, where, according to tradition, barrels of beer were emptied by repeated bumpers,—a fact which made the procession, as one may well imagine, almost never-ending.

This gave displeasure to the authorities, who at once let Santerre understand that his place was in the army. Cheered through coming into touch with his honest quarter, he docilely returned to the west. But he was no longer in such a great hurry to “throw the rebels into consternation.” He became a simple, consulting tactician, and contented himself with giving advice. From Orleans he went to Tours and from Tours to Rennes, where a warrant for his arrest reached him. It was by force this time that, lying on the straw-covered bottom of a cart with bound hands and feet, he set off once more for Paris. After a ten days’ journey he at last arrived, and was immediately imprisoned at the Carmelite convent in the Rue de Vaugirard.

The Couvent des Carmes was not a fashionable prison, and those who arrived there from Bourbe, Plessis, and St. Lazare, where fine manners were obligatory, suffered singularly through the contrast. “Here,” noted a prisoner, “the majority of the occupants are without either neckties or coats, with soiled trousers, bare legs, handkerchiefs tied round their heads, uncombed and unshaven. The women wear plain dresses or *pierrots*. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

There were other inconveniences, as, for instance, when the inmates were awakened at night by the arrival of the van of the Revolutionary Tribunal and by the calling over of the names of the victims of the coming day. But to this, it appears, they became accustomed.

Santerre, who remained there six months, pleased the ladies by his fine bearing. He was the neighbour of Madame de Beauharnais, the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, and Madame de Custine. His optimistic self-sufficiency succeeding in divert-

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des Prisons*, 1797, vol. ii.



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ing, and sometimes reassuring them, they called him the "comforter." He was one of the first, on the 10th of Thermidor, to be set free. Hurrying at once to the faubourg, he found, alas ! that the *Hortensia* was closed, that his house was pillaged, that the doors were sealed, the vats empty, and the brewery ruined. Madame Santerre, desirous of saving her imperilled dowry, had gone, taking with her all the articles of value which she had been able to save from confiscation.<sup>1</sup> But what was still more heartbreaking, the quarter showed not the slightest interest in the return of its *gros père*, whom it appeared hardly to recognise. All those people who had so often drunk his beer now passed the closed brewery without even turning their heads. For the first time, perhaps, Santerre saw the vanity of glory. It is certain that he went through a crisis of discouragement, and that on the 11th he sent in his resignation to the Committee. Then, utterly undeceived, he left Paris, and took shelter with his elder brother and sister who had land under cultivation at Tour-Morouard, in the Seine-et-Marne. Agriculture attracted him: he found that his retreat bore a flattering resemblance to that of Cincinnatus, who used to be much extolled in times of political deceptions. But his sister was a Royalist; meals ended with disputes; and she spoke to him in so bitter a manner of *his* Republic that he quickly returned to Paris, set up again at the *Hortensia*, and attempted to renew some of his old relations. At this the moribund Convention immediately took fright. Spied upon and followed, he took a dislike to his empty house, his idle brewery, and his deserted stables—the scene of happy days, but whose silence and devastation now wrung his heart. Seeing him with nothing to do, one of his brothers-in-law, Pelletier d'Anffreville—the husband of one of the twenty-six Deleinte girls—proposed that he should take over the management of a small wall-paper manufactory that he owned at Biguë, at the gates of Senlis. Full of enthusiasm, Santerre set off. But funds were lacking for carrying on the business, so he solicited a little assistance from the Minister. Discouraged by receiving no reply, he left Biguë, resigned

<sup>1</sup> A. Carro.



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himself to the sale of his brewery and abandoned for ever the house which he had occupied for twenty-four years. In January 1796 he went to live in a sorry building standing against the walls of Cagliostro's old house in the Rue de Harlay-au-Marais. His entire resources consisted of 50,000; of his three sons, he had still to support the two youngest; and his wife, who had cast off the name of the "infamous Santerre," and forbidden him her door, had commenced divorce proceedings. She was living alone in the suburbs.

Santerre saw that it was necessary to bestir himself. He had reached the age of forty-four, was strong and active, fine in appearance, and, in spite of his disappointments, still a boaster. By dint of pestering ministers for a position and setting a great value on his talents, he obtained employment in the remounting department. As Ouvrard, the exceedingly wealthy Commissioner of provisions, advanced him money, the ex-brewer realised large profits and began to speculate shamelessly in National Property. Some purchases and lucrative sales enabled him to buy a large building called the Rotonde,<sup>1</sup> situated within the Temple enclosure, and in this he lived comfortably, reigning over two hundred tenants, and henceforth provided with an average income of 25,000 francs.

This un-hoped-for return of fortune brought back many friends. Solicitors, with *mon general* on their lips, called upon him and were sure of being well received. Processions of beggars, as in the prosperous days of the *Hortensia*, passed up his staircase and "besieged his apartment." He received them with open hand and open purse, glorying in their flattery, which so stupefied him that at times he appeared to be suffering from a form of madness. People could obtain anything by flattering his mania. A poor Gascon devil, named Darieux, who pretended that he was descended from Darius, impudently brought this title to the notice of the "General," whose munificence he solicited. How could Santerre leave in

<sup>1</sup> The Archives of the Seine (Domaines) contain several documents concerning Santerre, the Rotonde, and the difficulties that arose between the ex-General and his neighbours. See, in particular, 479-11626 and 606-857.

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distress the descendant of a famous tactician of antiquity—one of his brothers-in-arms? So the General placed his house at the disposal of the grandson of the conquered hero of Marathon. Darieux at once made himself comfortable, took in a nephew, sent out invitations to his friends, entertained his acquaintances—and one morning disappeared after borrowing a considerable amount from his host's purse.<sup>1</sup>

Santerre for a long time regretted the departure of this ungrateful "son of a king," but other parasites consoled him. He bought a pretty country seat, the Château d'Eve, in the neighbourhood of Ermenonville, and he there kept a chaplain and an old major-domo of the old style, named La Jeunesse, who insisted on calling his new master Monsieur de Santerre. The Château d'Eve being open to any officer who presented himself, it was always full of soldiers, who talked of nothing but strategy, armaments, fights, accoutrements, saddle-cloths, sabretaches, and promotion. Thus did the host imagine that he was still a "man of war." This was his hobby-horse. Poor General Santerre.

Qui n'eut rien de Mars . . . que la bière

as some verses said of him, could not console himself for being excluded from the abundant distribution of plumes, epaulettes, stripes and ranks which inaugurated Bonaparte's reign. He imagined that there was not the slightest difference between himself and the Hoches, the Marceaus, the Berthiers, the Massénas, and the Desaixes, who had been his colleagues or "his inferiors." He felt that he was able to ride amongst the staff of the new *régime* quite as well if not better than they. He even got it into his head that the First Consul regarded him as a rival, and that the conqueror of Arcole was jealous. Wishing, with his customary frankness, to show that he was without presumption, that he had not filled his head with chimerical ideas, and that he would modestly content himself with being Napoleon's equal, he invited him to luncheon—*en camarade*! Bonaparte declined the honour, but sent his minister Berthier to replace him. Berthier was an old acquaintance of

<sup>1</sup> A. Carro.

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Santerre. They had been together with the army of the West. The brewer used the familiar *tu* in his conversation with the Minister of War, which was rather an anachronism. Moreover, though he still retained revolutionary manners, he saw that the time had come to moderate his republican ardour, and he now discoursed, without bitterness, on the subject of the last tyrant. "Poor Louis XVI.," he said, "was an excellent man, full of good qualities, and I loved him much. . . . I still regret him. I could not imagine that they would go to such extremes. It was a misfortune, a very great misfortune!"<sup>1</sup>

He was as sincere when he said this as he was on the evening of January 21st when he boasted of the opportuneness of the beating of his drums. Santerre was one of those *bons vivants*, ingenuous at bottom, expansive and self-sufficient, who mistook their enthusiasm for ideas, their guests for admirers, and their presumption for genius. When the intoxicating, changeful wind of revolutions blows upon such heads as his, they become inebriated with popularity and are unhinged on the occasion of the first disillusionment. The more he was forgotten the more did this ex-general of volunteers believe that he increased in importance, and since he was no longer anybody, his vain illusions took the form of that special madness called megalomania. The idea of commanding one of those divisions of steel which he saw file past at the Carrousel was a constant source of infatuation. He applied ceaselessly for the restitution of his rank. His *dossier*, in the archives of the Ministry of War, is full of these applications, to which the authorities obstinately refused to reply.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He added: "To the very end I believed that a pardon would be granted on arriving at the foot of the scaffold. I had even buoyed up the king with this hope, so much did the idea of his death horrify me. *But suddenly the order to beat the drums arrived.* I could no longer save him—I was lost!"—A. Carro.

<sup>2</sup> Here is one of them amongst ten. "To his Excellency General Dejean, Directeur Ministre at the War Administration. General, I had the honour six weeks ago to ask His Majesty the Emperor and His Excellency General Berthier, Minister of War, to be allowed to serve in my rank, either with the active army, or wherever I may be thought useful. I have had the honour of serving under the orders of General Berthier, whose esteem and friendship I have retained. I have also had the honour of commanding the Emperor. Their multifarious occupations may have made them forget my request. . . . I organised 50,000 men in 60 days,

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One day, at the Champ de Mars, on the occasion of a review by the Consul—Santerre missed not one of them, with their gallopades of dragoons, flourishes of trumpets, waving of flags, and all such things which he loved—one day he placed himself prominently in Bonaparte's path, and on approaching him with a salute a dialogue ensued. "What is it you want?" asked the Consul. "I wish to serve in the army," replied Santerre. "Make out a request," said Bonaparte, "and I will see." A request! he had already so often made it. However, full of confidence, he sent it in afresh, and on August 7th, 1800, received notice that his resignation was annulled. The great joy he experienced on receiving this news was short lived, for on the same day he was allowed "to benefit by the half-pay pension, in accordance with his rank."

So he was not wanted! Evidently they regarded him with suspicion, and feared that he might raise an insurrection in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Alas! who still remembered the *Hortensia* beer? Thinking that he was being followed, he hid himself. Not that he was afraid, but because he could only see himself in one rôle, either that of a victor or that of a proscript. The retreat in which he buried himself was a furnished hotel in the Rue de Rohan, a few yards from the Tuileries, where his persecutor, who did not deign to notice him, reigned.

However, there were some compensations, and in spite of being on the retired list his re-instatement in the army allowed him to wear a uniform. So he ordered a splendid one, and wore it for the first time at the marriage of his second son Alexandre, an agriculturist in the Seine-et-Marne. The ceremony took place at the Meaux Cathedral, which had just been reopened, and when the news spread that "the infamous Santerre" would be seen there, the entire town, eager to see "the man who had the drums beaten," crowded to the church. And when, tall-statured, broad-shouldered and satisfied of

and I have fought, chief in command, with honour, bravery, and success. I think that I am entitled to your Excellency's justice. The 29th of Vendémiaire, Year XVI. Divisionary General Santerre, Paris, enclos du Temple."

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mien, he appeared in his brilliant General's uniform, there was such a movement of curiosity amongst the spectators that he imagined he was the object of an ovation.<sup>1</sup>

This was the beginning of a fresh crisis. The imperial nobility was then in formation and the Emperor was distributing to his Generals fragments of his conquests. People spoke of nothing but appanages, majorats, fiefs, principalities, duchies or baronies, and this troubled the ex-brewer. All his companions-in-arms received either titles or estates, whereas he had nothing but his half-pay. It was clear that the Emperor would never consent to aggrandise still further a redoubted rival. In order to repair this injustice, Santerre rashly bought, on March 13th, 1805, one of the finest estates in France,—Torigny, in the department of the Manche. It was the former domain of the Princes of Monaco, its sixteenth century *château* had been built by Maréchal de Matignon, and in addition to an extensive park with royal avenues, there were woods, ponds, shootings, mills, and 3,600 *arpents* of land and forests. He purchased the whole for a sum of 1,600,000 francs exclusive of 300,000 francs expenses.

His fortune merely consisted of the Rotonde property, valued at from 300,000 to 400,000 francs. He had sold the Château d'Eve, the upkeep of which was involving him in debt, and had retained but a small piece of land, in the midst of beautiful scenery, where he counted on building a sepulchre *à la Jean Jacques*. The purchase of Torigny was, therefore, a manifest extravagance.<sup>2</sup> When the time for paying the

<sup>1</sup> General Augereau was about to leave his Château de la Houssaye to attend the marriage when a messenger arrived with an order to proceed at full speed to the First Consul.—A. Carro.

<sup>2</sup> "The new lord hastened to take possession of his domaine, and he was shortly seen to arrive with one of his 'brothers-in-arms.' The gilded youth of Torigny shuddered on learning this, and a little plot was quickly organised. There then lived at Torigny an old soldier of the royal army who was famous for his skill with the drum. The conspirators obtained his assistance, and, after providing him with a drum, placed him under the windows of the billiard room where Santerre passed the best part of his days with his companion. At a given signal the old soldier began to execute a series of long rolls whilst the conspirators kept on the watch. Irritated by the noise, Santerre appeared at the window and ordered silence, whereupon the young men showed themselves, the ex-general was hooted and the drum continued to beat—an echo of the drums of the Place



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registration fees expired Santerre was penniless. Sentenced to pay double the tax, he appealed, addressed himself to the minister, and became entangled in a series of lawsuits, the results of which were beyond doubt. The Rotonde was seized and sold by the judicial authorities for a quarter of its value. On hearing of the wreck, the creditors began to quarrel over the wreckage. What property he had left was seized, with part of his pension, whilst his horses, carriages, furniture, and everything he had retained from his former life of luxury were sold. He could not make up his mind, however, to part with the keys and chains of the Bastille, for which an Englishman offered him a considerable sum. These were his fetiches, the relics of his first triumph, so he piously took them away, with a bed, a table, and a few chairs, to a lodging in the Rue Saint-Louis-au-Marais, at the corner of the Rue Saint-Claude. His new quarters were on the first floor, "above a coach-house, at the bottom of a courtyard," and they consisted of a small entry and a single room "divided by a screen." With his income reduced to that part of his pension which could not be touched,—2,200 francs—he here lived with his eldest son Augustin. All his friends had disappeared, and in their place were creditors, continually besieging his door.

What a life for the hero who had been the idol of Paris! He feared to set his foot outside and trembled at every ring of the bell. Augustin kept guard and turned out duns. There were continual disputes on the landing and the narrow entry had to be defended inch by inch, whilst poor Santerre, hidden behind the screen and cut to the heart by human ingratitude, held his breath in order not to betray his presence. One day, when slipping out of the house to go and dine with his youngest son Théodore, some bailiff's men who were passing the door arrested him on behalf of a creditor who claimed 750 francs. Rushing out, Augustin implored them to desist. The men were touched, and, awaiting the result of the son's

*de la Révolution.* Santerre understood, and closed the window. The next day he left Torigny, and never appeared there again."—Information supplied by Monsieur M. Guilbert.



SANTLIRE.

*(From an Italian caricature in the possession of BARON DE VINCK.)*



## THE LAST DAYS OF SANTERRE

efforts to obtain the money, consented to keep the General prisoner in a cab.<sup>1</sup>

Santerre was a free man the same evening. But that humiliating journey in a moving prison, jolting along the streets of the Bastille quarter which had formerly seen him acclaimed and beaming with joy—that stain on his life's history—that shattering of his plumes cruelly affected him. During the night he had a slight paralytic stroke, and from that time "his memory began to fail, and he became timid, uneasy, and taciturn." He used to remain for days and days together with bent head and closed eyes buried in bitter recollections. One idea, which no one could eradicate, remained in his bankrupt mind. He wrote letter after letter to the minister asking "the Government to give him a stronghold"; for he imagined that the English, still terrified by his plan of invasion at the head of 100,000 Parisians, had bought the iron cage which the Chouans had formerly made, "and that they were seeking to capture him for exhibition in England." Between the walls of a fortress he considered that he would be safe from a sudden attack.<sup>2</sup> This wild idea lasted during the whole of 1807. At the beginning of the winter his condition improved. An arrangement had been entered into with his creditors, and this was somewhat of a respite. His sons then got him into a four-roomed apartment in the Rue du Pont-aux-Choux, at the corner of the boulevard; but, suspecting that the most

<sup>1</sup> "Auguste Santerre . . . knew that a certain private person who was closely related to his father, and who owed him everything, had received the day before a payment of 6,000 francs. The young man hastened to his house, and found that the money was still there and disposable. But the ungrateful possessor refused to lend him a penny, and, in addition, spoke ironically. Dismayed at this unexpected refusal, and discouraged at the thought of fresh applications, Augustin returned home, made his silver-plate into a parcel, and wandered out into the streets of Paris, without any fixed plan. Suddenly, the name of his father's nephew, M. Dupuis-Santerre, a wholesale hosier, whom he knew had an excellent heart, occurred to him. He hastened to find him, related—with an emotion that was very natural, and doubtless with eloquence—what had happened, and offered to leave the parcel of silver in pledge for its value. The husband and wife, without allowing him to finish his story, refused to accept the pledge and immediately handed him the sum he required."—A. Carro.

<sup>2</sup> A. Carro.

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inoffensive passer-by was a savage enemy, who might attack him, he stubbornly refused to go outside.

However, Santerre's perseverance, which had never been able to overcome Berthier's aversion, touched the Duc de Feltre, his successor. On February 5th, 1808, he was summoned to wait upon the Minister of War. . . . That day was certainly the most beautiful one of his life. After so many disappointments, falls and injustices—after so many years of abnegation, rancour, and imposed silence, he could at last claim what was due to him. What illusions must have passed that morning through Santerre's troubled brain! Who knows but that the poor man, whilst his *femme de ménage* was taking his fine uniform out of lavender, was lifting his beplumed hat from its box, and was polishing the tarnished gilding on his sword, persuaded himself that he was to have a glorious revenge? What were they going to offer him? A division? The Government of Metz or Lille? Perhaps that of Paris? Or was it to be a title? A duchy? Why not?

He expressed a wish to set out alone. Drawing himself up, he tried to be the handsome Santerre of the days of the *Hortensia*—and perhaps he was really convinced that he had not changed. Getting into a cab at the door of his house, he began his important journey across the city.

There had been a fall of snow during the night, and the thoroughfares were covered with a muddy, slippery mass. The cab-horse advanced but at walking pace. In the crowded streets in the centre of the city, and especially at cross-roads, it had frequently to make long waits amongst the tangle of immobile vehicles. Santerre, horrified at the idea of missing his appointment, stamped his feet and looked at every clock they passed. On reaching the entrance to the Pont des Tuileries, which was then very steep, the cab stopped and refused to go any further. Unable to contain himself any longer, the general opened the cab-door and, in spite of the frost, continued his journey on foot. He reached the Rue du Bac, tottering and slipping, but hastened, nevertheless, towards the old Hôtel d'Havré, in the Rue de Lille, occupied by the Minister of War. At last, worn out with fatigue, he

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arrived. . . . But when about to cross the great solemn-looking entrance, the soldiers on guard saw him suddenly stop, and the next moment, with a movement like that made by a man who stumbles, fall full length in the muddy snow. He was picked up paralysed and unconscious, and in this state was carried home, to be divested of the soiled uniform which he was never again to wear. . . . The unfortunate man—helpless, worn-out, and imbecile—lived for one year longer. He died on February 6th, 1809, at 14, Rue des Petites-Ecuries, at the house of his youngest son, where he had been taken a few weeks before.

And not a single friend followed to the grave the body of the man whom 100,000 citizens had once adulated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The news of his death rapidly spread over Paris. He had long finished playing any *rôle*, even before his faculties began to give way, and had become a mere stranger to the population of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Yet people feared, or pretended to believe, that there would be some commotion on the occasion of his funeral. Thus, either through fear or the effect of that abandonment which so quickly comes upon those who have been struck down by destiny, *none of his friends attended the obsequies*. It is true that the majority of the invitation cards arrived late at their destination—a delay which the public attributed to the suspicious police of the Empire."—A. Carro.

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At the top of the Rue de Charonne, not far from the outer boulevard, and in a quarter of manufactories and workmen's dwellings, there stands a good old rustic-looking house whose fine and hospitable appearance is to me a delight. It is more than a hundred years old, and, as though rather weary, a little irregular in its lines. As to its name, it is called the *Maison Belhomme*.

Belhomme was a doctor who, in 1787, established in this comfortable residence, then an isolated building among vineyards, on the heights of Charonne, a private asylum and sanatorium. It quickly prospered. At the end of two years it already contained forty-six inmates,<sup>1</sup> of which only nine were there "of their own free will." Among these latter was Ramponeau,<sup>2</sup> the famous practical joker of the Porcherons dancing-garden, who, after having had his hour of celebrity, had withdrawn there—old, weary, and sorrowful—to end his days in peace. The thirty-seven lunatics included a few women, ten provincials, and several priests, one of whom, the Abbé François Thimothée de Lambour, under the delusion that he was a great actor, was wearing himself out by declaiming entire tragedies without giving himself time to take breath.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, Dr. Belhomme, who, like many doctors, was a liberal, was appointed captain of the Popincourt Company:<sup>3</sup> and it was then that the happy idea

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, Dr 5, No. 58.

<sup>2</sup> "Ramponeau, who was born in 1724, retired when old and weary to the house of a doctor, M. Jacques Belhomme, who had an asylum at 70, Rue de Charonne."—Jal.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of the Prefecture of Police*.

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occurred to him to place his house at the disposal of the Section, for the purpose of harbouring—in return for payment, and under the pretext of curing rheumatism or quartan fever—those wealthy prisoners who did not relish life in a common jail. Being in relation with some of the leading men of the new *régime*, his proposal was accepted, and there soon arrived at the house in the Rue de Charonne from all the prisons of Paris numbers of exceedingly rich aristocrats, who had obtained this favour by much tipping.

It was, indeed, a favour, as one may judge. For, whilst the agents of the Public Prosecutor went daily to Sainte-Pélagie, to the Madelonnettes, or to the Abbaye to obtain victims for the scaffold, it was noticed that, thanks to a special privilege, none of the prisoners at Belhomme's were brought before the tribunal. It was known, moreover, that they lived there in the fresh air, and that neither their jailers were too severe nor their prison doors too closely locked. They were allowed to receive visits from their friends and to walk about as they liked. In fact, so absolute was their liberty that at the end of a month the place was crowded.

This Charonne house thus became an envied oasis unapproached by death, everywhere else a menace—something like one of those enchanted islands of the Arabian tales where life glides by without care, or fear, or tears. Inmates of other prisons spoke of this favoured jail as a paradise where one could be certain of sleeping without fear of hearing the brutal voices of those who called out the names of future victims of the guillotine, and it was rumoured that Belhomme had obtained "tacit protection"<sup>1</sup> for his house, on terms which were very lucrative for everybody.

It was said that he had made a bargain with the Public

<sup>1</sup> Louis René de Ranconnet de Noyan, who was born in Brittany in 1730 and who died at Etioles in 1810, was one of the boarders at the Maison Belhomme during the Terror. His grandson, Comte de Sainte-Aulaire, who had been imprisoned with him there, published a pamphlet of recollections in 1879, with the title *Portraits de famille*. Only a few copies of this work were printed, and it is therefore extremely rare. Saint-Marc Girardin published some extracts from the manuscript in the *Journal des Débats* in 1854. It is from these reminiscences, which are of the highest interest and, considering Comte de Sainte-Aulaire's character, of indisputable authority, that I have taken the details to which the reference *Portraits de famille* is from time to time attached.



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Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, who had undertaken not to worry the inmates of the establishment. In return for this, Belhomme gave him a big commission on the tribute which he exacted from them—an enormous tribute, but which they willingly paid, as you may well imagine. Everything went well whilst their money lasted. But payment days were sometimes painful, and a large number of boarders often found it impossible to satisfy their jailer's growing greediness. Accounts had to be settled at the end of each month, after which the amount for the following month was fixed. Each prisoner then bargained for his life in Belhomme's study, for the one who could not pay was immediately drafted to a less favoured prison, such as the Conciergerie or Sainte-Pélagie, where he was within the clutches of Fouquier-Tinville.<sup>1</sup>

Fouquier-Tinville's name appears to have served on many other occasions as a bait in that fishing for dupes which was practised on so large a scale by his subordinates who swarmed around the revolutionary tribunal and the Committee of General Safety. Unscrupulous yet powerful vagabonds, these men openly disposed of and trafficked in people's lives, and were sure of impunity because of the secrets which they

<sup>1</sup> "Belhomme's house at the top of the Rue de Charonne, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, was devoted to the treatment of the insane. Those whose condition necessitated severe superintendence were shut up in a building at the bottom of the courtyard. The quieter ones occupied rooms in the front of the house. A fairly large courtyard, divided by railings, served as a promenade for both. The owner of the establishment, who was not a bad fellow at bottom, troubled himself no more about medicine than politics. He first of all took in lunatics, then prisoners; and he preferred this latter business because it was the more productive. Being in close relations with some of the men who were in power at that time, he used his influence to obtain tacit protection for his house. He interested them in his speculation, which became very profitable for everybody. Fouquier-Tinville and the committees of the Convention sold their tolerance at a high price. Belhomme exacted enormous sums for board and lodging, but these the prisoners willingly paid. After all, the *régime* of the Terror lost nothing, for these prisoners could always be taken again, either when their resources were exhausted or when a sanguinary caprice necessitated their head. The only thing that it was necessary to do, in order to preserve the establishment's good reputation, was to see that they did not go direct to the scaffold, but spent a few days first in an ordinary prison. Belhomme took care that this formality was always observed. His solicitude for his guests went even further: he endeavoured to make their lives agreeable, and usefully protected them outside, so long as they were able and willing to give him plenty of money."—*Portraits de famille*.

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were in a position to discover. There is an entire gallery of portraits of these unknown men to be painted, and they would be much more instructive than the large historical frescoes on which only the first subjects figure. Bonjour, Coulonghon, Longueville-Clémentière, Mallet *dit* Baptiste, Morel, Lalligand, Quesneau, Héron, Toutin, and Feneaux—these are the men who made the Terror. Yet we know nothing about them, except that, under the name of *porteurs d'ordres* of the Committee of General Safety, they were requested to prosecute “all enemies of public happiness”—an indefinite mission which opened to them every house, every prison, and every suspicious place. They had the right to “confine and question there without witnesses anyone whom they chose,” and they could be neither arrested nor imprisoned *on any pretext whatever*.<sup>1</sup> Even Napoleon himself never had at his disposal a power which was comparable to that of the least of these spies. Should the sincere and detailed memoirs of one of them ever be discovered, we shall be more fully informed about the Revolution than by a hundred big books full of ingenious deductions. For these men understood and put it into practice infinitely better than that foolish fellow Robespierre himself, who was astonished when the mine, which he thought he had charged only with flowers, exploded under his feet.

The name of a certain Vilain, an advocate at the revolutionary tribunal, may, without fear of calumniating him, be added to the above list. He was known to have influence and was much consulted; and he used to advise his clients “to have every confidence and do exactly as he told them.” Mme. de Saint-Aulaire had recourse to him on behalf of her father, Comte de Noyan, who, imprisoned in the Conciergerie, was threatened by an early trial before the tribunal. Vilain informed the lady that if she would entrust him with 6,000 livres he would take them to Fouquier-Tinville and “that she would immediately see the result.” Mme. de Saint-Aulaire handed the money to the advocate and on the very same day was granted an audience by the Public Prosecutor, to whom she made her request—that her

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4774.

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father be transferred to the Maison Belhomme. Fouquier at once made out the order, without a word of explanation, handed it to his visitor, and it was carried out the same day. As to the 6,000 livres, they most certainly never left Vilain's pocket. Yet the noble lady—like many other royalists whom he had served the same trick—continued until the end of her life to praise him as a man “of sublime disinterestedness and admirable courage.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus were the inhabitants of the Maison Belhomme recruited—a very mixed company, as you may well imagine, and very frolicsome. These honest people, having paid, thought that their lives were safe, and this contributed not a little to make the Charonne establishment the gayest place in Paris. There successively arrived the Duchesse d'Orléans, the Comte and Comtesse du Roure, a Talleyrand, a Nicolai, Linguet (who afterwards left, as poor as Job, to be condemned to death), Volney (who came from La Force, where he had been able to meditate at leisure on *les Ruines et la Chute des Empires*), “Citoyenne Penthievre,” the deputies Rouzet and Estadeux, and Pétion's widow. . . . This good company was enlivened by the prettiest actress of the Théâtre Français, Mlle. Lange, who was soon joined by her comrade, Mlle. Mézerai.<sup>2</sup> Neither of them could take seriously the perils with which they were so curiously associated, and they still retained many opulent adorers. Numerous carriages stood outside the prison door every evening. Within, the inmates played, laughed, and enjoyed music.<sup>3</sup> They loved

<sup>1</sup> *Portraits de famille*. There is no need to cleanse Fouquier-Tinville's memory of these accusations. Nothing is more certain than that his name was put forward by his subordinates, but he does not appear to have taken part in these compromising acts. He died poor.

<sup>2</sup> The prison register of the Maison Belhomme is in the *Archives of the Préfecture de Police*.

<sup>3</sup> “The 20th of Nivôse, Year II. Difference between a poor and a rich prisoner. Should the latter be ill, even though he has but a slight cold, the well-paid prison doctor immediately draws up a report and the sick man is suddenly taken to Belhomme's, where, for a payment of 600 livres a month, he daily sits at a splendid table, served profusely and with truly Asiatic delicacy. But this is not all. For the same price, strangers take up their residence in this house and communicate with the prisoners without difficulty. They assemble together, play, and eat well; so that the place becomes more a house of pleasure than a *maison de santé*. Even a few women have found a means of gaining entrance by stating that they are the wives or relatives of prisoners, and perhaps the least inconvenience that will

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also, and, whilst everybody else all over the remainder of France had resigned themselves to living on from day to day, Belhomme's guests made plans for the future. Madame de Saint-Aulaire's very young son met there the lady who afterwards became his wife. The atmosphere was such that the austere deputy Rouzet fell over head and ears in love with the Duchesse d'Orléans. Belhomme paternally tolerated everything. He was the best and most jovial of jailers, and so frank in business matters that his boarders came to have for him a sort of esteem. He himself did not hide the fact that he had a weakness for them, and it was with death in his soul that he informed those whose resources were exhausted of the cruel necessity of sending them to the scaffold. It was in this manner that he made the charming Duchesse Béatrice Yvonne de Choiseul, when she could no longer pay her way and was occupying the place of someone else more pecunious, listen to reason. They parted good friends. She left for the Conciergerie, but remained there only a few days before being taken, on the 3rd of Floréal, to the guillotine.

Vacancies in the Charonne boarding-house were much run after, and when it was no longer large enough to hold everybody, the good doctor rented an adjoining house, the Hôtel Chabonais,<sup>1</sup> the garden of which was contiguous. The prisoners were hardly guarded at all and nothing would have been easier than to escape had such an idea ever occurred to them. Nowhere in France could they have been in such a delightful place of security as there. True the *régime* was detestable. Belhomme sold them their lives, nothing more nor less; everything else was charged extra on the bill. In spite of its enticing reputation, the house was very badly kept. The occupants were crowded into small rooms which contained merely those articles of furniture which they were disposed to hire. The two hundred tenants lived pellmell with the few lunatics whom Belhomme had been unable to expel, but whom he had relegated to the attics; and

result from this abuse will be to see a prison transformed into—Latour-Lamontagne.”—*Archives Nationales*, F<sup>7</sup>, 3688<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Archives de la Seine*, Land Register 195.

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sometimes on the promenade, which was the most frequented place of all, people collided with some madman or other, agitated by the bustle around him—with Ramponeau, taciturn and morose, or with the Abbé de Lambour, who, thinking that he was Garrick or Lekain, declaimed with wild gestures, tirades from *Mérope*.

Those who had to economise and were obliged to eat at the common table suffered pangs of hunger, but dared not complain. There was no fixed time for sitting down to table: meals were sometimes at two o'clock in the afternoon, sometimes at ten o'clock at night. Not knowing the exact hour at which meals would be ready, inmates stood in a string at the dining-room door, and as soon as it was opened rushed in, for it was a case of first come, first served. Each table, set for thirty, was served as if for eight—and that was the usual proportion. It is true that meals could be brought in from outside, but a woman named Chabanne watched at the door and collected a tax on each importation of that nature—either in money or in kind: fruit, cutlets, or bottles of wine; and it was with these that the miscellany of the *table d'hôte* was composed.<sup>1</sup>

This organisation was certainly a model of ingenuity and economy, and Belhomme hoped that the Revolution would last for ever. But the best human institutions are doomed to ruin, and this one was not far from its end. The Popincourt Section had the inconsiderate idea to send to this reputedly wealthy prison two penniless prisoners named Lefebvre and

<sup>1</sup> "The deputy Public Prosecutor, this 5th day of Pluviôse, Year II., denounces Belhomme, the keeper of a *maison de santé* for prisoners in the Rue de Charonne, on a charge of vexatious and extortionate practices, such as the exaction of exorbitant sums, paid in advance, from the rich, and inhuman treatment of poor *sansculottes*, who have to sleep on straw, &c. Belhomme exacts a rental of 1,000 livres a month for a very small room. Citoyenne Breteuil paid him 2,000 livres in twenty days, but he did not consider he was bound to supply her for this price with a plate of broth or even mulled eggs. Two citizens, J. B. Lefebvre and Pierre Hilaire Ducassoy, who were treated free of charge, were given a wretched, fireless room and a heap of straw. Citizen Tissier pays 400 livres, but Belhomme has advised him, should there be an inquiry, to declare that he pays only half. There are quarrels at table over the food. At dinner yesterday there were eight apples for thirty people. Citizen Perrotin and three Nantes comrades pay 400 livres for a small room without furniture, and Belhomme threatens to have them transferred to prison if they refuse . . . &c."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4592.

Ducassoy, in the philanthropic hope that they would be able to live on the crumbs from the tables of the rich. But unfortunately there were no crumbs. Belhomme raised his voice in lamentation, and thought of getting out of the difficulty by making a collection among his boarders in aid of the intruders.<sup>1</sup> But the average sum subscribed was low, and Belhomme, moreover, did not like the idea of impoverishing his paying guests for the sake of the two "free" ones. Lefebvre and Ducassoy considered, however, that in their quality of "free" guests they should be well fed and comfortably lodged, so, as soon as they found what the house was like, they declared that they were not at all satisfied. Belhomme exhorted them in vain to be resigned, and pointed out that the greatest ladies, such as Citoyennes d'Orléans and de Penthièvre, as well as the noblest gentlemen, such as MM. du Roure and de Ranconnet, were contented with ordinary fare. Lefebvre, who was foolishly good-natured, appeared touched by the argument; but Ducassoy frankly declared that "he did not care a d—n," that he was not in prison to die of hunger, and that he knew what to do. Whereupon he found a means of sending the Section a denunciation of Citizen Belhomme "on account of his vexatious and extortionate practices, such as the exaction of exorbitant sums, paid in advance, from the rich, and the inhuman treatment of poor *sansculottes* less favoured by fortune."

In the possession of M. d'Arbois de Jubainville are the accounts of a certain Citizen Radix de Sainte-Foix, who lived in several Parisian prisons during the Terror. On the 3rd of Frimaire, Year II., he entered La Force, but remained there only one day before going to the Conciergerie, where he paid twenty livres "for a month in advance." This, however, was but a sort of gratuity to someone, for immediately afterwards we come across the following items:—

Paid to Citoyenne Richard (wife of the *concierge* at the Palais) for two months' lodging: 20 livres.

<sup>1</sup> "Belhomme made a collection in aid of two penniless prisoners."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 4592.

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Cost of living, paid on entering, from the 5th of Frimaire to the 7th of Pluviôse, that is, sixty-three days : 300 livres.

This comes to a little more than five livres a day. On the 7th of Pluviôse he enters Belhomme's, and immediately prices rose :—

To the *huissier* who brought me : 25 livres.

To Citoyenne Chabade (*sic*) for one month : 400 livres.

To the kitchen-maid : 261 livres.

To the door-keeper : 6 livres.

A basket of coal : 1 livre.

A *demi-voje* of wood : 16 livres.<sup>1</sup>

Over and above the charge for board, everything had to be paid for separately : coffee, the hairdresser, heating, laundry, furniture, cream, and sugar, the price of which was fabulous. Radix de Sainte-Foix never bought less than 73 livres' worth at a time. Then there were the "surprises" which Belhomme invented for the purpose of draining money from his boarders, such as collections on behalf of the Section, offerings to patriots, a tontine for saltpetre, &c.; not to mention the part played by Citoyenne Chabade—or, as some called her, Chabanne—who acted as the doctor's factotum and "gathered in the taxes."

But Radix was one of those who were least exploited. The price of a very small room at Belhomme's was 1,000 livres a month. Citoyenne Breteuil disbursed 2,000 livres in twenty days, but then she had been supplied with "a plate of broth, a *crème*, and mulled eggs"! Citizen Pelletier-Morfontaine was charged 3,000 livres a quarter for an attic without a stick of furniture. . . . Now, as Belhomme's register, preserved in the archives of the Prefecture of Police, contains about two hundred names, it will be seen that the speculation must have been fruitful and the dividends large.

The question is, where did the money go? Two things appear to be certain : first, that Belhomme had sufficient

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that these sums were paid in assignats. Nevertheless, the charge of one livre for a basket of coal indicates that in this case they may have been paid in cash. Moreover, paper money in the Year II. was far from being as depreciated as it was later.

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influence to shield all his boarders from the scaffold as long as they could pay; and secondly, that Fouquier-Tinville's participation in this astounding business is in no way proved. "I have served my country with the disinterestedness of a true republican," he wrote his wife, on the eve of his appearance before the Tribunal. And, in fact, he left his family "delivered over to the horror of the most terrible poverty." It was, therefore, not he who pocketed the sums drained from Belhomme's rich boarders, for, during his nightmare of an existence, we find neither expensive women, nor luxuriousness, nor love of gambling—nothing save the occasional habit of drinking to excess, as though under the influence of *coups de fièvre*, at the refreshment bar of the Tribunal or in a wine-shop on the Ile, at the end of the Pont-Rouge.

Truth is due even to Fouquier-Tinville. He was not interested in the slightest in Belhomme's business, for as soon as he suspected what was going on at Charonne he sent one of his representatives to make an inquiry. The result was disaster for the sensitive Belhomme, who must have been heart-broken at his boarders' ingratitude. Most of them produced their receipted bills and their empty purses. Thus it came out that Citizen Tissier paid 400 livres a month for a corner in a loft, but that Belhomme had advised him, should there be an inquiry, to say that he paid only half. Citizen Perrotin and three other inhabitants of Nantes occupied a small unfurnished room at 500 livres a month, and Belhomme had threatened to send them to the Conciergerie if they dared to bargain. . . . The whole affair was thus unveiled. The woman Chabanne, who, particularly detested by the prisoners, was by no means forgotten in their evidence, was sent to the Salpêtrière, whilst Belhomme was arrested on a charge of "extortion and incivism."<sup>1</sup>

But he possessed friends, and instead of being imprisoned at the Conciergerie, the most dreaded of all the antechambers of the scaffold, he was first sent to the Ecossais, and then to

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Prefecture of Police* Report : Popincourt, No 13830 Arrest of Citizen Belhomme, director of a *maison de santé*, and transfer to the Ecossais



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a rival *maison de santé*, at Picpus, where he was doubtless exploited in his turn by an unscrupulous *confrère*. It was from there that he was taken to the Criminal Tribunal, which sentenced him to six years' imprisonment in irons.<sup>1</sup>

Deprived of its head, the history of the Maison Belhomme may be said to end. However, in the papers of Hermann, the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, preserved in the archives of the Chancellerie, there is to be found a rather piquant adventure relating to a mysterious lady, wearing a blue cloak, who every evening used to slip into the Evêché to see Fay,<sup>2</sup> the under-steward of that sinister hospital for condemned prisoners. This visitor was no other than "the wife of Citizen Belhomme, imprisoned at Picpus," and she profited by her husband's detention to go and see Fay at his hospital, where the atmosphere was "so charged with foul smells" that the unfortunate *concierge*, in order to prevent himself falling ill, was obliged "to smoke day and night, chew tobacco, eat garlic, and drink bad vinegar"—a *régime* which cannot have resulted in very agreeable rendezvous for Madame Belhomme.<sup>3</sup>

It was on the shoulders of this courageous woman that the work of carrying on the *maison de santé* fell. But as the 9th of Thermidor soon came the boarders rapidly dispersed. The only ones who remained were those who had been there before the Revolution, a few lunatics who had witnessed the

<sup>1</sup> The 5th of Floréal, Year II.—*National Archives*, F7, 4592.

<sup>2</sup> For particulars concerning this person and the hospital of the Revolutionary Tribunal, see a very complete study published by M. Léon Legrand, archivist at the National Archives, in the *Revue des Questions Historiques* for July, 1890.

<sup>3</sup> "On the night of the 3rd of Germinal, whilst the *concierge* (Tarcilly) was making his round of the wards at eleven o'clock, accompanied by Chauveru, one of his turnkeys, he noticed an unknown woman wearing a blue cloak, leaning with her back against the chimney-piece of the room in which General Cartaux, Levassieur, Le Pescheux, and others were in bed, and conferring with them and the said steward (Fay). He asked the woman what she was doing there and by whose order she had entered at an unseasonable hour and unknown to him the *concierge*. The steward, furious at being found breaking the rules, seized Tarcilly by the collar, called him a scoundrel, and by his bad behaviour gave the woman time to escape before the *concierge* had time to arrest her. The witness has since learnt that this woman frequently came in the evening in a cab to see the said steward, and that she was the wife of a man named Belhomme, the keeper of a prison, and now detained at Picpus on a charge, it is said, of incivism."—Private papers of Citizen Hermann.

storm without understanding it, and a few old men who were delighted to see the overcrowding of the house come to an end. Among the latter was Ramponeau, who remained there until his death on April 4th, 1802.

Belhomme returned there in the spring of 1798, after four years' imprisonment. What had become at this time of his first wife? Was she dead or had she obtained a divorce? I cannot say. It is a fact, however, that he was married in May 1798 to a Mlle. Agate Chaniot.<sup>1</sup> He was sixty-one years of age, whilst she was twenty-two, and it seems to be clear that she was never informed of the vicissitudes through which the honest *maison de santé* of which she became the manageress had passed. To her honour be it said, she had the highest esteem for her husband, with whom she lived for twenty-six years, for he did not die until September 26th, 1824. During this long period she never heard any allusion to the past, neither recrimination nor reproach; and she never met one of her husband's former boarders. She was in ignorance as to everything, even his sentence and his four years' imprisonment. The truth was not revealed to her until after thirty years' widowhood, when M. de Saint-Aulaire discreetly related in the *Journal des Débats* his recollections of the Charonne prison. Poor Madame Belhomme indignantly protested in a very touching letter,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Seine.*

<sup>2</sup> Here is the text, almost in its entirety:—

"Sir [the manager of the *Journal des Débats*], An obliging friend has sent to my place of retreat—to me, a woman almost an octogenarian—a copy of your journal of the 17th of September, in which I find imputations of such a nature concerning the treatment said to have been inflicted in 1793 on M. de Noyan's companions in misfortune in M. Belhomme's *maison de santé* that I, M. Belhomme's widow, would be lacking in my most sacred duty if, in my own name and in that of my children, I did not here protest against them.

"If we are to believe the author of the article in question, M. Belhomme was a sort of jailer, a *protégé* of Fouquier-Tinville, who acted as a procurer for his establishment. . . Such an insinuation I indignantly deny. M. Belhomme never played the abject rôle attributed to him. My husband was never a jailer; he was the director of a *maison de santé* into which, in 1793, as has happened under all *régimes* and in many such houses as his, he received political prisoners. He did this with all that humanity, consideration, and respect which is due to illustrious victims of revolutionary excesses, which he deplored more than anybody. Especially did he do so disinterestedly—and this is a point upon which I would particularly lay stress.

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in which she affirmed that her husband "had never been a jailer": that, far from having enriched himself by despoiling his unfortunate guests, "he had ruined himself with and because of them": and that if he had been imprisoned it was by order of Fouquier-Tinville, "who considered that he was too gentle and full of consideration for his guests." M. de Saint-Aulaire respectfully replied that "his memory could not have deceived him," and there the matter ended.<sup>1</sup> Of those far-off

"Certainly no words would be strong enough to condemn such mingled cupidity and inhumanity. Fortunately this merely exists in the sometimes rather cruel imagination of the author. I affirm that M. Belhomme, far from having enriched himself by despoiling his noble and unfortunate guests, ruined himself with and because of them. For, whilst the patients paid, the political prisoners, whose possessions had been confiscated, did not always do so. I am in a position to prove that on several occasions, notably at the time of the Restoration, claims were made by my husband on various personages or their families, whose names I abstain from mentioning, on the subject of arrears for their board.

"Would you care for a more conclusive proof? I married my husband on the 12th of Floréal, Year II., that is, four or five years after the Terror. My marriage contract, drawn up before Me. Ménard, notary at Versailles, shows that, whilst my trousseau was valued at 2,000 francs—the only dowry I brought M. Belhomme—his entire fortune consisted of 12,000 francs, made up as follows: 10,000 francs, the net value of the *maison de ville*, which had been purchased in 1787, long before the Terror; and 2,000 francs, the estimated value of furniture, household articles, linen, &c.—the whole free of debt. One must admit, sir, that M. Belhomme did not profit much by his exactions:

"Finally, and I here conclude, *Monsieur le Rédacteur*, M. Belhomme, doubtless in his quality as Fouquier-Tinville's *protégé*, was himself imprisoned for nine months at Sainte-Pélagie by order of his illustrious patron. . . . Veuve BELHOMME."

<sup>1</sup> M. de Saint-Aulaire replied:—

"Madame, I sincerely regret having caused you sorrow and I feel it necessary to tell you so. The article on my grandfather . . . was intended merely for perusal by members of my own family. When, at a time of great trouble, I authorised its publication, I forgot the phrases which caused you pain, and the wording of which I should have modified had I recollected them. . . . However, madame, these phrases have not the sense you give them. I did not say that M. Belhomme was a cruel jailer, and I charged him with no sort of complicity in the crimes of the Terror. On the contrary, I said 'that he was a very good man, that his house was not guarded, and that it was a paradise to which all the prisoners of Paris aspired to be admitted.'

"The fact that Fouquier-Tinville and his agents sold authorisations to live in so favoured a house at a high price in no way compromised M. Belhomme. It is true that he asked very high prices for board, and that he received at his house only those boarders who could or were willing to pay them. On this point I cannot admit that my memory has deceived me. But I willingly agree with you, madame, that the addition to his establishment of the buildings and gardens of the H<sup>ôte</sup>l Chabannais and the appropriation of those large premises to their new use must have

days there remains to-day nothing but an inscription which was placed on the old house of the Rue de Charonne in 1787, "Maison de Santé du Docteur Belhomme"; a high doorway through which so many people entered, as into a place of refuge; a courtyard, divided by railings, which served as their promenade; and the garden, eternally young, where Rouzet, the member of the Convention, whispered sweet words to the widow of Philippe-Egalité. Since these are the only witnesses left, is it now indiscreet to let truth have its revenge?

entailed considerable expense. It was natural that M. Belhomme should indemnify himself through those who profited by it, and it would not be reasonable to reproach him with not having retained boarders who could no longer pay him . . . &c "

Madame Belhomme was satisfied with this explanation, and when a month later M. de Saint-Aulaire died she left her card upon his widow, who was very touched by this attention. The documents which I have here published prove that M. de Saint-Aulaire's recollections were accurate in every detail, and that Madame Belhomme, married in 1798, was in entire ignorance of what her husband had been before she knew him.

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THERE exists at Lamballe, in Brittany, an ancient Ursulines Convent, which the municipality of that place in 1793 transformed into a prison. On the ground floor were the quarters of Père Cloteau, the jailer, three cells, a low-ceilinged room, and a closet: on the first floor were two bedrooms, and higher up still was a large garret.

Twenty people might have been comfortably lodged there, but the authorities crowded in two hundred prisoners, women for the most part—wives, mothers, daughters of *émigrés*, or others whose aristocratic names—old Breton names whose sound resembled that of the breaking of surf on shingle—caused them to be suspected. Amongst them were Daën-Kerménénaus, Etang de Troaëcs, Houdu de Villecadios, and Quintin de Kercadius.

The female prisoners included a young mother of twenty-six, Marie Victoire de Lambilly, *ci-devant* Comtesse Mouëssan de la Villirouët. She was a shrewd, thoughtful, merry, and exceedingly brave little woman with brown chestnut hair, a round chin, and brown eyes, and her nose and forehead were slightly freckled. To complete her description, let me say that she adored her husband, her senior by thirteen years. An *émigré* since February 1792, Comte de la Villirouët had joined the Princes' army, whilst his wife took refuge at Lamballe, at the house of an old relative, Mme. de Caredeuc de Keranroy. It was there she was arrested, and on October 12th, 1793, that she was imprisoned at the Ursulines Convent.

<sup>1</sup> The *Memoirs* of Comtesse de la Villirouët, née de Lambilly, were published a few years ago by Comte de Bellevue, in conformity with the original manuscript, and accompanied by very interesting genealogical notes (Paris: Juste Poisson, 1902). It is on this work that the following study is based.



VICTOIRE DE LAMBILLY

PLEADING FOR HER HUSBAND BEFORE THE MILITARY COMMISSION,  
ON THE 3RD OF GERMINAL, YEAR VII.

*(From a picture painted in 1790 in the possession of the Marquis de BÉLIEU, great-grandson of M. de Villaret)*

# THE REVOLUTION

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Prison life, as you may imagine, did not at all suit her; and she showed her exasperation. Keenly conscious of what was “due to her,” her soul was revolted by injustice. She had never taken an interest in politics, and was not even one of those noble ladies who put on fine airs and treat the peasants with inordinate pride. Her manner was quite natural and frank. An ex-noble indeed! What a fine excuse for annoying people! The fact that she had been born an aristocrat was the result of chance, and she refused to admit that she ought to be blamed for it. Separation from her children caused her great impatience. The eldest, Charlemagne, was only five years old; Césarine, the youngest, only nineteen months. Were they also to be suspected?

Hardly had the prison doors closed behind her when Marie Victoire—“femme Villirouët,” as she signed herself, without haughtiness—began to write letters of protest and reclamation. “Shall I never see my children again?” she said in one of them. The denunciation which had brought about her imprisonment, and which described her as cunning, clever, and sly, she discussed word by word. “I am not cunning, for I do not know how to flatter; nor am I clever, since I allowed myself to be taken; nor sly, since I have never hidden the truth.”—Her husband was an *émigré*, was he? She knew nothing whatever, she said, about that. Besides, was it her fault if he were? Her husband was the master and did what he pleased.—These letters are spirited, well turned, short, and affecting;<sup>1</sup> and they touched the hearts of the authorities, who authorised Citoyenne Victoire Villirouët to receive her children in prison and have them with her during the day.

Her cell thus became “a place of delight.” Caring little for

<sup>1</sup> “Citizens, pardon me if I again trouble you. But am I to see my children no more? Since you cannot let me see them every day, oh! I pray you to permit me to have them with me for an entire *décade*. I have three, and surely, at their age, they are not to be suspected. The eldest is four, the second three, and the youngest two. Moreover, they will not leave the prison. Kindly accord me this demand, citizen; I make it with all my heart. Having sacrificed my property and liberty, leave me my children; do not deprive me of the only thing I possess, my only consolation; and believe in the eternal gratitude of your fellow Citoyenne Victoire Lambilly, femme Villirouët [sic].”—*Letter from Mme. de la Villirouët to the Administrators of the District of Lambilly, April 2nd, 1794.*



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comfort, she cheerfully resigned herself to supervision and spying, to searches and the "common pot"—a huge stew-pot in which Père Cloteau prepared his boarders' food. In the depth of winter the prisoners were without a fire. But Victoire's good humour and high spirits were equal to the occasion, so she proposed that they should dance to keep themselves warm. And thus everybody danced: venerable grey-haired dowagers, secularised nuns, and ruined, morose old noblemen. At nightfall, in that usually quiet town of Lamballe, where even the clatter of a pair of *sabots* created a sensation, people could hear the sound of voices and laughter and moving feet as they passed the convent-jail, a sign that the prisoners, in order to keep themselves from shivering, were dancing those lively dances the *gaillarde* and the *tricotets*.<sup>1</sup>

Victoire de la Villirouët had been in prison for fifteen months, when, on January 8th, 1795, it was rumoured that Bollet, the member of the Convention, had arrived at Lamballe from Brest for a stay of twenty-four hours, and that he had put up at the inn known as the Grand'maison. This was an opportunity not to be lost. With her ready pen, Victoire immediately wrote to the deputy, informing him that seventy-six prisoners, in the greatest destitution and dying of cold, were huddled together at the Ursulines, and begging the favour of an interview. Signed and folded, the letter had next to be got to its destination. Victoire descended to the jailer's quarters, but found that Père Cloteau was either absent or asleep, that it was ten o'clock at night, and that the entire house was locked up. The brave woman, whom nothing discouraged, advanced to the big street door, where, determined to summon every citizen in the town, she began to knock and to shout at the top of her voice. A passing boy, hearing the noise, approached and asked what was the matter, whereupon the letter was slipped to him, with a request that it be taken

<sup>1</sup> "Among other things, he asked me what we did in prison to keep ourselves warm. 'I' faith, citizen,' I replied, 'we danced. The Administrators didn't seem to like it, but that was all the same to us. Knowing that whether we danced or not our position was unchanged, we passed the time as we liked. You are aware that it is often good to shake off the thought of one's misfortunes in order to preserve the necessary courage to support them.'"

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immediately to the Grand'maison and handed to Citizen Bollet, and that “if he did not find him there, to look for him elsewhere.”

The boy hastened on his mission and returned in half an hour to say that he had seen the Representative, who would visit the prisoners on the morrow. The glad news spread throughout the strange prison which Victoire had intoxicated with her good humour like wildfire, provoking “such cries of joy and gambols that God’s thunder could not have been heard” above the din. But there was great disappointment on the following day. Hour after hour passed without Bollet putting in an appearance. Victoire at once wrote him a letter of reminder. “Citizen Representative,” she said, “we are assured that you leave to-morrow, and we are terribly frightened that you will omit to see us.” But still the member of the Convention did not come. At about four o’clock, however, three members of the Committee of Supervision visited the prison on his behalf, bringing with them a list of fifty people, headed by Citoyenne Villirouët’s name, who were to be liberated. This time there were neither shouts of joy nor gambols. Poor Victoire was utterly downcast at the result of her application. She was free, it is true, but more than twenty of her companions were to remain in prison, and their disappointment spoilt her happiness. Hastily taking down the names of those who had not been favoured by the member of the Convention’s clemency, she hurried off, on leaving the prison, to his inn. But Bollet would not receive her. An hour later she returned, and was once more refused an audience. So, in company with three friends, who had likewise been liberated, she determined to wait at the inn door and not move away until she had attained her end. At last Bollet’s heart was softened, and he admitted them. He was a dry and austere peasant of the Artois, and as he was very busy he could grant them only a minute. But soon the interview began to amuse him, and he was manifestly surprised and charmed to find that an aristocrat could possess other feelings than terror or bravado. Citoyenne Villirouët’s bright smile and frank face made him unbend. It seemed for a moment as though the tragic misunderstand-

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ing of the Revolution no longer existed. Regicide and countess were in perfect accord.<sup>1</sup>

"I will not hide from you the fact," said Bollet to his visitors, "that you owe your liberty to the citoyenne who wrote to me. I don't remember her name . . . It was something like Vil . . . Villi . . ."

"Citizen, it was I," replied the countess, "and you give me great pleasure in saying that."

"*Ma foi, citoyenne*, I was to have left this morning, but your lot touched me. 'How much,' said I to myself—I, who was in front of a big fire and yet still felt cold—'how much these poor wretches who cannot warm themselves must suffer!'"

The member of the Convention affecting to be a good easy man, she seized the opportunity to ask him to liberate the remaining prisoners. But he opposed her request. "No, *ma bonne amie*," he said, "without the advice of the Committee of Supervision I cannot do it." The Committee's advice? She would see to that; only he must promise that he would not leave Lamballe without seeing her again. Bollet promised and the interview came to an end.

It was, unfortunately, too late to do any more visiting. Throughout the night the generous-hearted woman dreamed of nought but petitions and applications; and when the next day came, "having mistaken the moon for the light of day," she was up at four in the morning. She knew that the Committee of Supervision would not meet during the day, so she decided to implore the members individually. Before

<sup>1</sup> The opening of their conversation was charming. "We found ourselves in the Representative's presence. Citoyenne Quengo begged me to be spokeswoman; and this is what I said to him: 'Citizen, I have the honour to salute you.'—'Your servant, citoyenne.'—'Citizen, we have come without delay to thank you for having granted us liberty.'—'Citoyenne, I am delighted to have set you free, and I trust that you will never give me reason to repent.'—'Oh! certainly never, citizen. But the liberation order which was read to us at the prison leads us to understand that our liberty is only provisional, and we have come to ask you to make it complete.'—'Do not let the word *provisoire* frighten you, citoyenne; it is customary to put it into such documents. You are quite free, and your liberty will not be interfered with unless you break the law.'—'In that case our minds are at ease, for when one has been so cruelly punished for doing nothing, one can hardly be exposed to the same fate for doing something.'"

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dawn she was passing along the deserted streets, and at seven she was knocking at the door of Citizen Margeot.

But Margeot was still sleeping, and ordinarily did not rise until nine. “Well, then,” said Citoyenne Villirouët to the person who had opened the door to her, “I will go to his room.”—“But his door is locked, citoyenne.”—“In that case I will speak to him through it.” “Citizen Margeot, Citizen Margeot!” she cried through the keyhole, “will you kindly get up?”—“Citoyenne,” came the answer, “it’s mighty early, and it was eleven o’clock last night when I got to bed.”—“I also, citizen, did not get to rest until late, and I’ve been up since four o’clock. The liberty of unfortunate prisoners is at stake. Citizen Bollet is about to leave and can do nothing without you. Come, citizen, get up. . . . I flatter myself that perhaps you are not awakened every day by so agreeable an alarm-clock as myself.”—“Most certainly not, citoyenne.”—“Very well, citizen, will you get up?”—“Yes, citoyenne, in a moment.”—“On your word of honour, Citizen Margeot?”—“Yes, citoyenne.”—“Then I will immediately go and call on your colleagues.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus did she knock at other doors, forcing her way in, awakening rough patriots who were sleeping through the best part of the morning, hurrying them over their toilet, and dragging from them, one by one, enlargement warrants. Then she hastened to Bollet’s—to find him in his night-cap. Giving her a seat near the fire and calling her “his little friend,” he signed whatever she wanted. She exhorted him to have patience and especially not to leave Lamballe; for she had only four more *dossiers* to complete. Back to the members of the committee she hastened. And at last she triumphed: the committee’s stamp was affixed to the last document—at the very moment that Bollet’s berlin clattered through the streets of the town towards Rennes! Victoire rushed down the staircase and into the street, shouting “Citizen Representative, I implore you to stop, only for a moment!” But the carriage had disappeared, leaving her in despair. . . . Not, however, for very long, for the same day she wrote to Bollet, and before

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Comtesse de la Villirouet*, p. 50.

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the end of the *décade* had obtained the release of the remaining prisoners.

After the accomplishment of this miracle, Victoire de la Villirouët and her children went to live with her aunt, Mme. de Kéranroy. Her fortune, owing to her husband's emigration to Jersey, was forfeited. Husband and wife had not seen each other for five years, and they hardly dared to correspond. The laws against *émigrés* had, however, lost something of their severity, leading them to hope that they would now be able to meet again. But certainly not at Lamballe. The meeting-place would have to be far from Brittany—somewhere where they were unknown. There, perhaps, it would be possible to risk the adventure. Buoyed up by the thought of success, Victoire left for Paris, under the pretext of asking the Directory to return her property, and put up at a furnished house in the Rue de Rohan, then called the Rue Marceau, at the Carrousel. This was in August 1797. About the same time, the inhabitants of Nantouillet, near Juilly, saw a peaceful bourgeois arrive amongst them and settle down at a small house in the village, with a boy of eight, whom he was teaching to read. He never went out, and the hours that were not devoted to his pupil's education he spent in digging his garden. His name, he said, was Guénier; and not a soul suspected that this philosopher *à la Jean Jacques* was Comte de la Villirouët, who had clandestinely landed on the Brittany coast, and, by giving the slip to spies and gendarmes, had succeeded in reaching the gates of Paris. The child was his own Charlemagne, whom Mme. de la Villirouët had brought from Lamballe.

Barely six weeks had elapsed when, following on the events of Fructidor, the terrible decree condemning to death any *émigré* arrested on the territory of the Republic was promulgated. Villirouët asked himself if he should again leave the country. But he felt that he had not the courage to do so, nor had his wife the heart to urge him to take such a step. His sojourn at Nantouillet, however, was becoming too dangerous. Paris—that attractive and gigantic hiding-place, with its inextricable labyrinth of tortuous

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streets, swarming with people, and its six-storied houses where you live unknown to your neighbours—was quite near ; Paris, where you are unfindable through the mere fact of mingling with the crowd. Besides, Victoire had found a safe retreat for her husband at the house of one of her friends, Citoyenne Artaud, in the Rue Poupée, a narrow passage joining the Rue de la Harpe and the Rue Hautefeuille. The Count made up his mind, passed through the city gate, and took refuge in the chosen hiding-place.<sup>1</sup>

This game of hide and seek made up the life of many a man during the three concluding years of the Directory. So many *émigrés*—snobs when they left the country—had returned, dragging their broken wings behind them, that the overworked police had lost all method in their operations. It was often chance that delivered one of these proscripts into their hands, whereupon he was immediately brought before a military commission and shot at Grenelle. But the others hardly troubled their heads about it. Just as people imagine during an epidemic that they are refractory to disease, these outlaws were under the delusion that they would never have the ill luck to be caught. Villirouët—or rather Citizen Guénier—in particular, had so strong a faith in his wife's skill and daring that he feared no danger, convinced as he was that, should the occasion present itself, “she would get out of the difficulty.” He crossed Paris daily to visit her, and the landlady of the house, Citoyenne Corpet, was somewhat surprised to see the little lady who had formerly been so modest regularly welcome her faithful visitor. The count spent the whole day in the Rue Marceau, taking his meals there and only returning to the Rue Poupée at night. He gave lessons to Charlemagne, who had been told to show the greatest prudence. Never was he to call his tutor by any other name than “Monsieur Guénier,” and when the count—forgetful, like all people who are over-

<sup>1</sup> “He occupied a bedroom in the house of one of my friends, Mme. Artaud, at No. 6, Rue Poupée, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, whilst u lived at the Maison d'Orient, in the Rue de Rohan, near the Place d' Carrousel.”

Mme. de la Villirouet afterwards lived, for some time, in the Rue de Malte, at the house of a restaurant-keeper named Goison.

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confident—played his *rôle* imperfectly, the child did not fail to remark: “Really, Monsieur Guénier, you are very imprudent. If anyone had heard you, you would have been shot.”

Danger is a sort of idol—when you grow familiar with it, belief vanishes. Little suspecting that for six weeks past he had been shadowed, Citizen Guénier visited Mme. de la Villirouët daily for more than a year. The police had received a denunciation from Lamballe. On January 14th, 1799, at the moment that Victoire was sitting down to table with her son and guest, there was a knock at the door. The maid-servant Gothon answered the call. Five men stood on the staircase: four of them armed. The fifth advanced, and with a polite salute drew from the pocket of his box-coat the end of a police commissary’s scarf. Victoire trembled so violently that her knees knocked together. As to Guénier, he put on a good countenance, presented his *carte de sûreté*, a forgery, and replied to the questions of the commissary, who, after seizing certain papers that were lying on the mantelpiece, requested the two prisoners to follow him. Between the four soldiers, with fixed bayonets, they set out on foot for the Prefecture of Police, Mme. de la Villirouët leaning on Guénier’s arm. Profiting by the noise of a passing vehicle, she whispered in his ear a final recommendation “to deny everything.” Hardly had they reached the central bureau when they were separated, and poor Victoire, who did not dare to kiss her husband, whom she would doubtless never see again, was thrown into that hell upon earth—the Dépôt.

How different from the provincial prison of Lamballe! On passing through the formidable iron door, a fetid and asphyxiating odour—that of caged wild beasts—seized one by the throat. Fifty howling, sordid, and ragged vixens were there—an ignoble band exhibiting every form of infamy. Surrounding the newcomer, they fell to kissing her and singing obscene songs in a strange slang. Squatting on the narrow bed which was pointed out for her were four women playing cards. . . . Night came and with it horrible nightmares. The bedclothes were black and stiff with filth,

yet it was necessary to undress and lie by the side of a companion debased by debauchery and vice. At ten o'clock there was a terrible noise—the signal to put out all lights, given by dragging a piece of iron across the prison bars. Monsieur Saint-Denys, the jailer, then appeared and made his round accompanied by two enormous bulldogs.

That great trial, the examination, came next day. Poor Victoire was obliged to confess—not without blushing—that her husband had long since emigrated far from France, but where she did not know. She had made Guénier's acquaintance in Paris;<sup>1</sup> but she was ignorant as to where he lived. He had become her friend and came to see her daily. “Has he slept at your house?” was asked. “Never! never!” she replied. And, in spite of her energy, she felt her honest heart swell, as she thought of what she was accusing herself, and burst into tears. On returning to the Dépôt her unique idea was to get a letter to her husband. But to do so it was necessary to pay, and she was without money. In return for a few pence her companions despoiled her. She was ready to sell them her black velvet hat and her false curls, but it was her rings they coveted. And what brutal questions they put to her! “Was it your lover whom they arrested yesterday with you?”—“No, it was not my lover.”—“Your husband, then?”—“No, nor my husband; it was a gentleman who was at my house.” Obscene laughter greeted her response.

On the third day, as Guénier was being taken back to his cell after an examination, she caught sight of him at the other side of a gate. Calling to him, she ran forward—to hear his announcement that he had confessed everything and that there was no further need to lie. “I would rather die

<sup>1</sup> Q.—What are your relations with Citizen Guénier?

A.—Those of friendship.

Q.—How long have you known him?

A.—One year.

Q.—How did you get to know him?

A.—Through one of those chances which are common in society. My society appeared to please him, so he asked permission to come to see me, and I granted it.

Q.—Where does he live?

A.—I do not know.

Q.—Your ignorance is not natural.

A.—It is quite natural, for it is the men who call upon the women, not the women, as far as I know, who call upon the men.



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than leave my wife," he had told the police. On hearing this, and at the painful thought that all was now finished, that he was irretrievably lost, Victoire fainted.

From this time they benefited by the tragic favours accorded the condemned. M. Saint-Denys, the jailer, authorised them to spend the day together in the one room of which his lodging was composed. There had even been put up for her a folding-bed at the foot of that on which M. Saint-Denys, his wife, and children—not to speak of the terrible dogs, which howled at the slightest noise—slept pell mell. In this hovel, grey with dust, a red-hot stove burnt day and night. Victoire was hoarse through it for more than a year. The only furniture in the room consisted of absolutely indispensable articles. Meals were taken sitting on the beds, with knees for a table. In the morning Mme. Saint-Denys went to buy provisions, and during her absence the Comtesse de la Villirouët sold spirits to the women in the Dépôt, handing the *patronne* on her return as many pence as she had served *petits verres*. Before supper she played dominoes with M. Saint-Denys for a bottle of cider, which she habitually lost. When by accident she won, M. Saint-Denys drank the bottle nevertheless, and neglected to pay for it. They baked potatoes on the stove, and feasted on them *en famille*. When Villirouët had made his wife's bed and tidied up the room—for M. Saint-Denys was too grand a person to condescend to menial duties—he was taken back to his cell for the night. Victoire liked this paradoxical life.<sup>1</sup> One of her maxims was that politeness and goodness were two keys with which to open hearts. To them she added that marvellous talisman—her untirable good humour. She well knew, moreover, that she would regret these days, and that soon she would be a widow. Villirouët, who was also resigned to his lot, enjoyed this precarious happiness. Perhaps he

<sup>1</sup> "For my part, I never ate with more appetite or slept better than in the office of the Dépôt. As regards sleep, it is true that my duties fatigued me so much that repose became as easy as it was necessary. Going to bed at ten o'clock at night, I slept until six in the morning, and so soundly that Saint-Denys sometimes said: 'It is impossible that that woman is guilty, for otherwise surely she would not sleep so well.' Small though the room was, I walked from end to end daily and for about an hour, exercise being absolutely necessary to me."

was convinced that his wife would yet find a means of getting him out of this critical situation.

Husband and wife had to separate after a month. Citoyenne Villirouët was liberated; the proscript was taken to the Abbaye prison awaiting his appearance before the military commission. The critical hour was drawing near. These special tribunals had the reputation of being “as pitiless as an execution platoon.” What was to be done? First of all, find a counsel. Victoire had the addresses of several: Chauveau-Lagarde, Cotellet, and others equally clever. But she put off communicating with them. One morning, when still in bed, the idea came to her to write to the judges to implore their pity. Write? No; they would not read her letter. Suppose she went to see them? Alas, they were soldiers, and she feared they would not receive her. If they did, she would be shown to the door at the very first word, before she had been able to plead her husband’s cause. . . . Plead for him? Ah! that was an inspiration! Yes; she would plead, she herself would plead before the Tribunal. And immediately she began to stride about her room, beginning her speech. As soon as the hour permitted, she hastened to the Abbaye to inform her husband of her project. Ever confident in his good fairy’s power, he approved of it. “I prefer you to any advocate,” he said, “and if you have the courage to plead my cause I am saved!” Returning home, she began to write her speech. But would she be allowed, she asked herself, to deliver it? It was necessary to obtain the authorisation of the Reporter to the Commission. She made inquiries, and found that this official was a young officer of thirty-two years, Captain Vivenot. Calling upon him, she found he was an extremely cold, impenetrable man, and that he appeared surprised at her application. “What you ask, madame,” he said, “is contrary to custom.” “But it is not contrary to the law,” she replied. “I have ever done for my husband what my heart and duty inspired. To-day he is accused, so I defend him. That seems to me quite simple.” The officer bowed, and conceded that “as far as he was concerned he saw



Finally she got into a cab with her friend Mme. Artaud to go to the Châtelet. On approaching the Pont au Change she caught sight in the distance of the accused, escorted by a strong guard, and thought she would faint.

The court-room was packed. Victoire, with oppressed heart and parched throat, reached the seat pointed out to her, opposite a table on which were ink, pens, and paper. The spectators hustled each other in order to get a better view of this little woman in white who was advancing towards the prisoner's bench. The *habitués* exchanged reflections. “She looks like a *première communiant*e,” said one. “Oh! how red her eyes are!” exclaimed another. “It is through much weeping,” explained a third. But she had not wept; she was burning with fever. The moment she feared more than any other was that at which a little door through which the prisoners entered was to open, when her husband would appear between guards. Twice did Mme. Artaud, who was seated near her, prepare her for the shock by whispering, “Courage, I hear the soldiers coming!” Twice did Victoire fear that she would faint, that she could no longer stand the strain. But she pulled herself together, and as the accused still did not arrive she had time to recover.

Here he was at last! A great uproar followed. Twenty soldiers accompanied him, two holding him by the arms. They made him sit down on a chair, facing the court. He was about a yard from his wife, who could see him in profile. He sought her with his eyes, perceived her, and smiled. Then the seven long-moustached judges, in full uniform and with trailing swords, appeared. They took their seats and General Catholle, the president, ordered silence.

The examination began. Villirouet replied calmly. Then the Reporter read his demands. After this one of the judges said to the secretary, “This unfortunate man cannot defend himself alone. I do not see his counsel.” The secretary replied, with a gesture towards Victoire, “His counsel is here.” “But will she have the necessary strength?” continued the judge. Alas! she knew not. Her heart was beating violently. Full of anxiety, she murmured a prayer and strove to muster her remaining courage—strove not

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to think. Suddenly she heard that they were speaking about her. "Who is your counsel?" the president asked the accused. "My wife," he replied. Then Catholle, in his frigid voice, said to her, "Have you anything to say?" "Yes," she responded, rising to her feet; and, taking up her manuscript, she began with the words "Citizen-Judges."<sup>1</sup>

Without apparent emotion she first of all apologised for her temerity. Then, coming to the point at issue, she stated that her husband had never been an *émigré*, but had remained at Orleans, ill. . . . She next entered on the legal aspect of the case, discussing laws and dates. Perhaps she held peoples' eyes more than their ears. Silence reigned, as dead a silence as though the crowded room had been empty. She dared not take her eyes from her papers, fearing to read a look of severity or *parti pris* on the judges' faces. Nor did she risk looking at her husband, for fear of breaking down. Only towards the conclusion of her speech, after having finished the legal part, did she dare, for the first time, to raise her eyes. . . . Big tears were streaming down the president's cheeks; his colleagues were all with bent heads "like men deeply affected"; and one of them was wiping his eyes with his fists. She herself at that moment almost burst into tears, but she once more pulled herself together and began her peroration:

"You are fathers and husbands, and there is not one of you who is insensible to the voice of nature. You cannot wish that, without any advantage to the country, the best of households should be shattered, that the tenderest bonds should be broken, and that children should be orphaned. You are just; therefore you cannot wish to sacrifice an innocent victim. You know the rights due to misfortune, rights as sacred as those of virtue itself; and since you have allowed me to defend him, my husband cannot be sacrificed!"

She stopped speaking. Her speech had lasted forty-two minutes. No cheer or clapping of hands followed. The painful silence continued. The president himself, with bent

<sup>1</sup> Comte de Bellevue gives the speech in full, in conformity with Mme. de la Villirouët's manuscript. It extends to twelve octavo pages.

head and the muscles of his cheeks twitching with suppressed emotion, hesitated to speak. At last he mastered himself and asked the prisoner “if he had anything to add to what had been said?” Receiving a reply in the negative, he added, “In that case, you will return to the Abbaye, such being the custom.” Villirouët then rose, saluted the judges, and, turning to his wife, held out his arms. At this the entire court gave vent to its feelings. It was perhaps the last time that husband and wife would embrace. Were they, indeed, to be separated for ever? Sobbing nervously, she held her husband tightly clasped in her arms. The crowd wept; even the soldiers, their eyes full of tears, turned aside. However, they led away the prisoner; and the judges retired to deliberate. They were absent for half an hour—half an hour of anxiety for Victoire. Had she hit the mark? Would they acquit him? What should she do if she heard the terrible word pronounced? . . . . She had an idea of raising up the people and of once more delivering her speech in the streets. . . . Suddenly a voice spoke in her ear the word “Acquitted!” It was that of the secretary who preceded the judges on their return into court. In a loud voice the president read the judgment: “*Considérant*. . . . *Considérant* . . . etc. . . . the prisoner is unanimously acquitted. . . .” Nothing further could be heard amidst the storm of triumphal applause. “Bravo! So much the better!” shouted the people. At this the general rose and in a threatening voice said, “This is not a place of amusement! It is not for you to approve or disapprove of our decisions. . . .” But his rough voice trembled and he frankly added, “I recognise, however, that this is very touching, most calculated to move you.” Once more the crowd was silent. Victoire was on her feet again addressing the judges. “Believe me, citizens,” she said simply, “when I tell you that my gratitude equals my happiness.”

A rush was at once made towards her. Lost in the crowd, she tried to escape its tumultuous ovation; but now that the sitting was over the people’s enthusiasm increased. Disputes arose. “We can’t see her!” shouted some. “You’re hiding her from view!” bellowed others; whilst someone proposed

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“that she should be placed on a table, so that they could see her at their ease.” A working-man, who was standing next to her with arms akimbo, kept saying, “It’s splendid what you’ve just done; yes, it’s splendid! Ah! what a brave woman you are!” The judges came down from the bench to compliment her, and all asked to be allowed to kiss her. She remained with them an hour whilst the secretary was making a copy of the judgment, and when this was ready and handed to her she went to her carriage. A crowd was waiting to cheer her on the quay-side; many of the people followed her to the Abbaye, and on arriving there she found that all the inhabitants of the quarter had assembled on the little square in front of the prison. When, radiant with delight, she appeared on her husband’s arm, a great cry of joy arose. “There they are, together! What a picture of happiness! Long may you live! Long may you be happy!” The same crowd would have hooted them had they passed together on a tumbril!

They dined at Mme. Artaud’s, in the Rue Poupée. Victoire was worn out with fatigue, and voiceless. In the evening, weeping with joy, she walked with her husband in the direction of the Rue Marceau. It was the first time that, without fear of spies, she had passed on his arm through the streets of Paris. “*Mon ami*,” she said to him when they were alone, “I can die now, for I have known what it is to be happy!”

At dawn on the following day, Easter Sunday, a deputation of women from the Markets called upon her. One of them took Victoire in her arms, raised her from the ground, kissed her on each cheek, and passed her on to the others. They then presented her with a bouquet, with the following complimentary words, “*Ma belle amie*, here are some flowers that are as natural as your heart.” Whilst touching glasses with them, Mme. de la Villirouët thought of the “stocking-knitters” of former days. . . . As she was congratulating herself on having such judges as she had had, one talkative old woman muttered, “The judges! Don’t mention them! They have condemned men who were quite as innocent as your

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husband!" This visit was the first of many others. During a *décade* the little Breton lady was the idol of Paris. The newspapers published an account of her deeds; <sup>1</sup> she was sung in verse and in song; and Citoyenne Bonaparte invited her to luncheon.

Victoire was not intoxicated by success. From the day on which she saved her husband we hear her spoken of no longer. She died at Lamballe on July 12th, 1813,<sup>2</sup> at the age of forty-six. M. de la Villirouët survived her thirty-two years. At the time of the Restoration he received the Cross of Saint-Louis, which he had doubtless merited by his personal services, but also "because he owed his life and liberty to the energy and courage of his wife, of glorious memory."

This was certainly the only cross that was ever awarded "for conjugal love."

<sup>1</sup> One of the articles is as follows:—"It was reserved for our century to see a woman unite the vehemence of a practised orator to the sweet affections of a wife. Citoyenne Villiroyt (*sic*) has just enhanced the already seductive charms of her sex by this new title to glory. On the 3rd of Germinal her husband was accused, before the military commission sitting at the former Châtelet, of being an *émigré*. She it was who pleaded for him, and with such force and feeling that, besides obtaining his liberation, the president had every difficulty in the world in restraining the spectators' deep emotion and applause."

<sup>2</sup> She was buried in the Lamballe cemetery. On her tomb is the following inscription:—"Ci git, Marie Victoire de Lambilly, dame de la Villirouët, née le 27 Avril 1767, morte le 12 Juillet 1813. Sa famille en pleurs lui a élevé ce modeste monument, faible tribut de ses regrets et de son amour. . . . Exemple du plus héroïque dévouement, son courage et son éloquence sauvèrent les jours de son mari. . . ."



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THE flat where Mme. Roland and her husband settled down in January 1793, on their leaving the Ministry, was on the second floor of a house in the Rue de la Harpe, opposite the Church of Saint-Côme. The building which had an exit into the Rue des Maçons-Sorbonne was a large one. Their little apartment looked on to the courtyard; its rental was 450 livres; and the tenants had signed a lease for six years, dating from Easter 1792. A six years' lease at such a time!

The somewhat cramped rooms were tastefully furnished. In the drawing-room were arm-chairs and *bergères*, upholstered in Utrecht velvet, surrounding an Erard pianoforte, then a still little known instrument. The windows were covered with checked white and yellow cotton curtains, in front of which were draped other larger curtains in yellow taffetas. The bedroom was furnished in exactly the same style but in blue; there were the same *bergères* and the same little checked curtains.<sup>1</sup>

The Rolands had two servants: a valet de chambre named Louis Lecoq and an honest Picardian of about thirty-four, Marguerite Fleury. Fleury—it was by her surname that the family called her—carried out the duties of *femme de chambre*, cook, and confidential maid. She had been thirteen years in Mme. Roland's service, had been present at her daughter's birth, and followed her wherever she went. Little Eudora was over eleven years old when her parents went to live in the Rue de la Harpe. She was placed under the care of a

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Seine*. Domaines: 121-3011.

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governess, Mlle. Mignot, whom Roland, however, soon afterwards dismissed.<sup>1</sup>

Long were the hours and dreary was existence, during the early months of 1793, in this poor little flat,—poor, that is, compared to the fine Ministry of the Interior which they had just left. Since their fall they had been left almost entirely to themselves. To declare, a year before, that you were a friend of Roland was equivalent to classing yourself with enthusiasts; now—such progress had the Revolution made—it was an act of incivism, and you ran the risk of proscription. A few intimate friends, however, still had the courage to cross his threshold: Bosc, a friend of twelve years' standing and the most faithful, Brissot, Louvet, and Buzot. The Rolands knew, moreover, that they were threatened, and their great desire was to retire to their Clos estate, in the Beaujolais, where formerly, "in a rustic and rather wild retreat," they had lived a few years which then appeared to be monotonous, but which now seemed full of sweetness. But how were they to leave Paris? Was not Roland a sort of hostage? His papers had already been seized on the night of March 31st. Now he was in daily fear; and on certain occasions the danger seemed so imminent that he sought an exile for his wife and child in the suburbs,—it is believed at Champigny.

Nor was this the least of his troubles. Mme. Roland loved Buzot with an impetuosity worthy of her heroic soul. She had struggled and the conflict had been fierce. "When a woman possesses both love and virtue," says La Rochefoucauld, "how much she is to be pitied!" Mme. Roland had nobly disclosed this chaste passion to her aged husband, and had confessed that she no longer felt for him anything more than "the feelings of a sensitive daughter for a virtuous father." The unfortunate man, who adored her, was tortured with jealousy, yet was bound to bow his head. What could he say? Of what could he reproach a woman of this stamp, guilty only of loving? What possible issue was there to this family drama? Take her away to a place of refuge

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Madame Roland*, published by Claude Perroud, Rector of the University of Toulouse. Vol. ii., Appendix T.

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far from Paris? But flight meant self-denunciation; it meant immediate arrest and the scaffold. Give her her freedom and disappear? It is said that Roland resolved on this; but he loved her so much that his heart failed him: he could not resign himself to the idea of parting.

No story is better known than this; but none is more tragic, and one wonders what the evenings of husband and wife must have been during that spring of 1793 as they sat in the blue bedroom of the Rue de la Harpe, with the windows, looking on to the quiet courtyard, open: she, dreaming of the other; he, watching her, his soul torn to shreds; full of love, rage, esteem, and admiration for the woman who so loyally was breaking his heart. When silence reigned, how ominous it must have seemed; what confidences they must have exchanged when they spoke! And thus they reached the point of wishing that one of the sentries whom they could hear pacing the street in the distance would stop at their door, break into the house, and drag them away.

One day, the 31st of May, it happened. Since morning, Paris had been crowded with armed troops directing their steps towards the Convention. But one cannot relate, after Madame Roland, the incidents of that famous day: her journey in a cab to the Assembly, her vain attempts to enter, and her return home, where the door-keeper, Lamarre, whispered to her that Roland, after having taken refuge in the flat of M. Cauchoux, the landlord, at the bottom of the courtyard, had slipped out through the Rue des Maçons door. Then came her journey through Paris in search of her husband, whom she doubtless discovered at Bose's, in the Rue des Prouvaires; her fresh attempt to enter the Convention, her return, jolting through the streets, and her typical anecdote relating to the cabman, whose only thought, on that day of agitation, was for a poor lost dog which persisted in following his cab. Finally, there was her return to the Rue de la Harpe, her arrest during the night, and her immediate imprisonment at the Abbaye.<sup>1</sup> What a feeling of joy there must have been in her heart when she realised that, without fear of succumb-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Madame Roland.*

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ing to it, she could unreservedly express her love, since, between her and the man she loved, there was exile and the bars of a prison! In those passionate letters which, by some unknown means, she got to Buzot, then in hiding at Caen, she refers to her husband, news of whom she had succeeded in obtaining. So as not to discourage "the man the most beloved by the most loving woman,"<sup>1</sup> she led Buzot to hope that perhaps at an early date she would be free. What a relief it would be to be delivered from the tormenting constraint of life in common with her husband—from marital obligations! "Thanks be to heaven," she wrote, "for having substituted my present chains for those I formerly wore. . . . How I cherish these irons which leave me free to love you wholly, to think of you ceaselessly."<sup>2</sup>

Roland, saved by Bosc, wandered about for twenty days before finding a place of refuge.

Bosc was a tender-hearted man.<sup>3</sup> He also was slightly in love with Madame Roland, and knowing that he could not hope to see it returned he had long since decided to be simply the most devoted and faithful of friends. He consoled himself by botanising. Whenever he had a half-day to spare he took the Montmorency conveyance and, with vasculum slung over his shoulder, wandered into the forest to collect plants. His friend Bancal, the member of the Convention—another intimate friend and suitor of Madame Roland—had bought there, at the beginning of the Revolution, a sort of hermitage, hidden in the forest, called the Priory of Sainte-Radegonde, and which he placed at Bosc's disposal. It consisted of a garden of seven *arpents*,<sup>4</sup> an ancient chapel with a steeple, and a small house, with a room and a cellar on the ground floor and two bedrooms on the first floor. Thus, almost, the Hermitage of Sainte-Radegonde still remains. On Sundays Bosc used to leave the Rue des Prouvaires for this solitary spot and spend

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated August 31st, 1793. Perroud's edition, vol. ii., p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated July 7th, 1793. Perroud's edition, vol. ii., p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> M. Claude Perroud has written on Bosc an article that is final. See his *Lettres de Madame Roland*, vol. ii., Appendix K. It is from that chapter of the remarkable work of the Rector of the Toulouse University that I have borrowed the above facts.

<sup>4</sup> An old French land-measure varying in different provinces from 3 roods to 2 acres.—*Translator*.

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the day there searching for plants amongst the under-wood.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as he heard of his friend's arrest, on June 1st, he hastened to the Rue de la Harpe and found the household in great alarm; the good-natured Fleury in tears, and little Eudora in despair. Taking the child, he placed her under the charge of the wife of a deputy, Mme. Creusé-Latouche, who occupied, in the Rue Hautefeuille, an ancient house known as the *Maison des trois tourelles*.<sup>2</sup> He then returned home, where Roland was anxiously awaiting him. On June 2nd, whilst an army of eighty thousand patriots was blockading the Convention, whilst the tocsin was being sounded and soldiers were scouring the streets, Bosc succeeded in passing the city gate with the proscript and in reaching Sainte-Radegonde, where the ex-minister remained in hiding for twelve days.

A longer sojourn could not be thought of. How could an isolated house that was almost always closed be supplied with provisions without arousing suspicion? Bosc, who had contrived to carry on his back to Madame Roland a basketful of flowers from the Hermitage, hit on the idea of taking the ex-minister to Rouen, where he knew of a safe hiding-place. The journey lasted six days, but how it was made is unknown. All we know is that, from June 20th, Roland was in such a place of retreat at Rouen that nobody could suspect he was there.

Before his marriage he had lived several years in Normandy and had fallen passionately in love with a young girl of Rouen, Mlle. Malortie, who had since died. He had kept up relations with this young lady's two sisters, who lived very quietly in the Rue aux Ours.<sup>3</sup>

Milles. Malortie were no longer young in 1793. Sensible and pious, but without bigotry, they had taken part until 1790 in the management of the finances of the chapter of the Cathedral, of which their father had been receiver-general. They were not well-to-do, and in order to make ends meet it

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de l'histoire de Versailles*, 1900. *Un Giroulin herborisant*, by Aug. Rey.

<sup>2</sup> This house, which was curious from several points of view, was recently pulled down. See *La rue Hautefeuille*, by Henri Baillère.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettres de Madame Roland*. Perroud's edition, vol. ii., Appendix D.

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was even necessary for them to do sewing. These good-natured women, doubtless consulted by Bosc, courageously opened their door to Roland.

Irritated by inaction and tortured by recollections, his life there was a five months' nightmare, every hour quickening his anguish. All his political friends were either proscribed or dead; his dream of liberty and justice had vanished; he was in despair at seeing the revolution which he had so ardently desired, and which he had served with so much abnegation, end in anarchy and blood. But nothing was so bitter to this shattered, doleful, and suspicious old man as his jealousy, haunted as he was by the image of his wife whose love, at the height of its passion, went out to another,—to a man who, not yet thirty-three, was active and courageous. With the pitiless cruelty of indifference, she made no attempt to hide her feelings. He knew that to her and the man she loved he was “the old uncle,” such being the name by which she referred to him in her letters to Buzot,<sup>1</sup> and which he conjectured were as ardent as their young hearts, as eloquent as love itself. So, in his anger, he decided to hold his rival up to the people's execration by means of “a poisoned document,” and forthwith set to work on this savage, splenetic, and detestable task, which, however, brought relief to his sorrow. . . . But even this revenge was refused him. Madame Roland, hearing of what he was doing, showed displeasure, and the wretched man—vanquished—destroyed the manuscript. Triumphant, she immediately informed Buzot of the good news. “*Le vieil oncle*,” she wrote, “is horribly depressed; he declines in a terrible manner. Sophie (herself) has got him to burn the testament of which you know, and which, on your account, so affected her. It was not an easy undertaking, but, as she demanded it, he made this last sacrifice. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

From this time the proscribed entered upon a period of terrible inactivity. He no longer wrote and he never went out. What disclosures did he make to his two old friends?

<sup>1</sup> See, in particular, the letter written at Sainte-Pélagie, on August 31st, 1793. Ferroud's edition, vol. II., p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> Letters of August 31st, 1793

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What reproaches did he utter? I cannot say. But "he found that life was torture, and such he made it to those around him." Yet he did not wish to die, for, however wretched his existence might be, it was an obstacle to his rival's happiness. Through desire for vengeance and in a spirit of despair and hatred he persisted in living.

On November 10th,—a Sunday afternoon,—he heard that his wife, who had been brought before the revolutionary tribunal two days before, in the morning, had been condemned to death. How was the news brought to him? Doubtless through the same mysterious channel that had served to keep up relations with Paris during the past five months; but perhaps simply by some Parisian newspaper printed on the evening of the 8th and distributed in Rouen *on the morning of the 10th*.

Roland did not concern himself. A consultation was immediately held with Mlles. Malortie with the object of deciding what he was to do.<sup>1</sup> He was now quite ready to die, but undecided as to the form his death should take. How, he asked, could he make it useful to the Republic? One plan particularly took his fancy: that of setting out for Paris, striving to reach it without being detected, slipping into the Convention, suddenly appearing, some fine day, in the tribune to put the debased Assembly to shame, and, then, perishing under the same knife that had just guillotined his wife. But to deliver himself up in this manner would ruin Eudora, since the property of the condemned was confiscated by the nation. This idea was therefore rejected and suicide decided upon. The question remained: Where was he to die?—Far from Rouen, so as not to compromise the friends who had provided him with an asylum. How was he to kill himself? And when?—As soon as possible.

Terrifying must it have been to hear these two old maids speaking of such things to this poor man, to whom they were, however, greatly attached, but whom they knew was so

<sup>1</sup> "With extraordinary courage he held a consultation with his friend Champagneaux (*Discours préliminaire*) relates it, in a somewhat dramatic form, but I regard it as essentially correct." Ferrout, Appendix D.

## THE DEATH OF ROLAND

wretched that they could not find a word to dissuade him from his project. At night-fall he gravely and deliberately burnt his letters; and, with his friends looking on, sat down to write. He wrote for a quarter of an hour, folded the paper, and put it in his pocket; then rose, put on his overcoat,—a long frock coat made of coarse beige fustian, and took a stick which Bosc had given him some months before. This stick was ornamented with a brass knob, and by touching a spring divided into two unequal parts, in each of which was fixed an eighteen inch blade. These weapons, when the stick was closed, slipped conjointly into two sheaths in juxtaposition.<sup>1</sup>

Roland prepared to leave the house. It is difficult to imagine the looks that were exchanged at that moment, the last words of recommendation that were spoken, the vain but very natural objections that perhaps were made,—objections based on the bad weather, the fatigue he would feel, and the uncertainty of finding a place to eat. Then, at six o'clock, when the darkness had gathered in, came farewells and departure, the sound of feet descending the staircase, the closing of a door, and silence . . . Finally, there was the solitude of the two old maids, the evening passed under the light of the lamp, whilst the rain beat against the window-panes, and they thought, with a shiver, of the dead man who but a short time before had been with them.

The proscript tramped through the muddy streets. For the first time for five months he breathed in the open air and rubbed shoulders with his fellow men. It does not appear that anyone noticed this tragic old man with quaker-like face, flat white hair, long grey coat, breeches and black stockings, walking through the moonless night.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> This stick is in the Rouen Museum, in the room devoted to French arms. The catalogue contains the following indication of its origin: "Roland de la Platière's dagger-stick, and with which he committed suicide on November 10th, 1793, on the territory of the Commune of Radepont or Bourg-Bandouin (Eure). This object, which was preserved by M. Mauchrétien, *juge de paix* at Pont-Saint-Pierre, who drew up the report relating to the removal of the body, was made over by his son, M. Mauchrétien, 153, Rue des Charrettes, Rouen."

<sup>2</sup> Roland wore on that evening "a rough fustian coat, a waistcoat the front of which was made of the same material, a fine linen shirt, a pair of black cloth breeches, black silk stockings, and a pair of shoes fastened with black silk laces."—Report on the removal of the body copied from the Radepont registers for 1793.

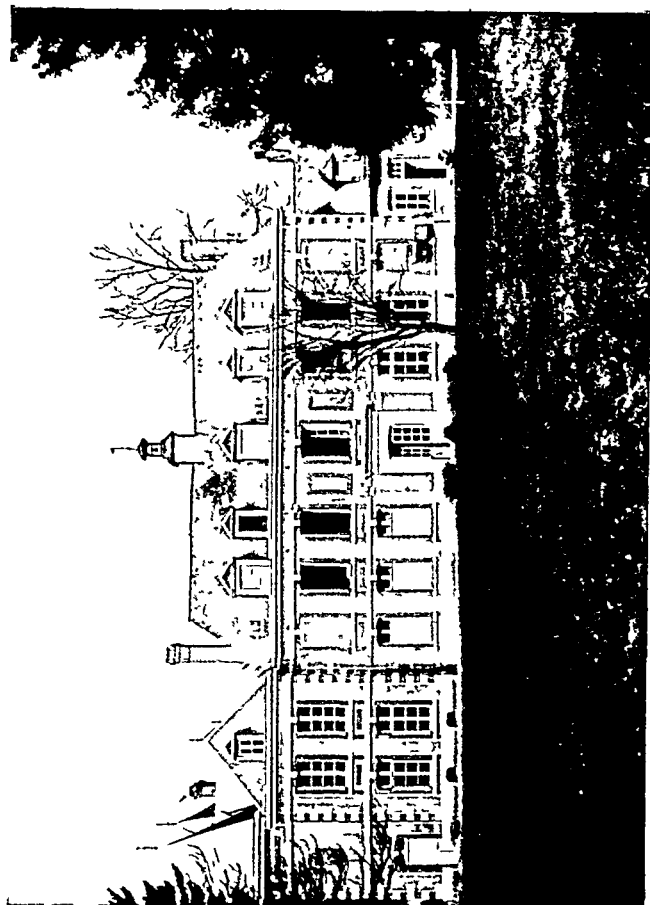


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wandered into the streets surrounding the Cathedral, reached the quay, followed the old Cours Dauphin, and began to mount the steep hill of Sainte-Catherine. The wind was violent and the rain fell in a lashing downpour. The road, doubtless, was deserted. Moreover, the main road to Paris which Roland was following did not then, as now, pass through the villages of Bloisseville, Mesnil-Esnard, Saint-Pierre de Franqueville, and Boos. Bending a little to the left, it passed the hamlets of Mouchel, Lefaux, and the Bergerie farm. This ancient way did not touch the new road until La Lande was reached, half an hour before reaching Bourg-Baudouin.

It must have been about ten o'clock at night when Roland reached La Lande—three long leagues from Rouen. Tired and depressed—as he is shown in his wife's correspondence, and unaccustomed to walking, he advanced along the wet, slippery road with difficulty—staggered almost under the squalls of wind. And what thoughts escorted him! His dearly beloved wife, bound with cords: her beautiful brown hair cut by the rough hands of the executioner's assistant; her fresh white neck imprisoned by the brutal guillotine and severed amidst a terrible splashing of blood. What was he going to do? And where was his daughter? Who had undertaken to tell her of her mother's death? Who, in two days' time, would tell her of that of her old father? And this nightmare followed him. Why not end it, once and for all? He had already, during his long journey, seen many spots along the roadside which he had doubtless said were suitable for what he had to do. But he put it off and continued to advance.

When La Lande was passed, he walked for a quarter of an hour and reached some houses on his left—the extremity of the village of Mesnil-Raoul. On the other side was a wood, the first he had met since leaving Rouen—a wood in which, that stormy night, the wind howled with rage. A quarter of an hour later, at a turning in the road, he caught sight of a covered path leading into the underwood. This sinister spot, this dark avenue, made him decide. He left the road and entered it.



THE CHÂTEAU DE COCQUITOT, WHERE ROLAND'S BODY WAS TAKEN.

(From a photograph by M. LI ON P. AUBREY.)



## THE DEATH OF ROLAND

It was a road leading to the Château de Cocquetot, belonging to Citizen Normand and situated within the Commune of Radepont. The spot was little frequented, for it was not until late the next morning that a passer-by saw the body, face upwards, some thirty to forty yards from the main road. It was not until one o'clock that the *juge de paix* of Pont-Saint-Pierre was informed. He proceeded to Cocquetot, accompanied by his clerk, the Mayor of Radepont, and a surgeon. The last-named examined the body and found that death had been caused by two dagger wounds in the left side. In one of them the weapon was still sticking, and at such a depth that it touched the dorsal vertebræ "in which it was firmly fixed." The body was undressed, and whilst the doctor continued his examination, the *juge de paix* searched the pockets of the deceased's great-coat. In them he found two *cartes de section* and a few papers, including the address of "Miles. Malortie, Rue aux Ours, at Rouen," and the famous letter the text of which, now to be seen in a glass case in the museum at the National Archives, has been so often quoted :

"Whoever may find me lying here, respect my remains—those of a man who died as he lived, virtuous and honest.

"A day will come—and it is not far off—when you will have to pass a terrible judgment. Await that day. You will then be able to act with a full knowledge of the matter and will recognise the justice of this warning.

"May my country, finally, abhor so many crimes and return to humane and social feelings.

"J. M. ROLAND."

On another fold of the letter were the words:—

"Not fear, but indignation.

"I leave my place of retreat on hearing that my wife is to be guillotined: I do not desire to remain any longer on an earth burdened with crimes . . . ."

On learning, in this manner, that the suicide was a noble and worthy man, the Mayor of Radepont sent a message to Legendre, the member of the Convention who was then at Rouen on a mission. Awaiting his arrival, the body was

## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

carried to the Château de Cocquetot, where it was placed on a large table<sup>1</sup> in a low-ceilinged room and covered with a shroud. It remained there the whole night and part of the next day, the 12th. When Legendre arrived and had officially authenticated the identity of the deceased—"thanks to his knowledge of the said Roland's physique"—he ordered that he should be buried on the very spot where he had committed suicide; and even expressed a wish "that there should be placed above the ditch a stake bearing an inscription informing posterity of the tragic end of a perverse minister who had poisoned public opinion, bought most dearly the reputation of a virtuous man, and who was the leader of a criminal coalition whose object was to save the tyrant and destroy the Republic." And having delivered himself of this phrase, he returned to Rouen to throw one of the Mlles. Malortie into prison.

Nobody, however, went to the expense of putting up this sign of infamy. Roland's body was buried somewhere there, but the exact spot is unknown. An old wood-cutter who was present at the interment, and who was still alive about 1852, said it was "thirty yards from the road," which leads one to believe that Legendre's order was, in this respect, strictly carried out. Local tradition has it that the body was buried upright in the ditch, but neither of this nor its mound, which long pointed out the place, is there trace or recollection.

A few days before her mother's execution, little Eudora left Mme. Creusé-Latouche's and was boarded, under a borrowed name, with a Mme. Godefroid. There it was that Bosc told her of the two terrible events which made her an orphan. As soon as the Terror had come to an end and he dare show himself again, he appointed himself the child's guardian, and it was under his charge that she returned to the flat in the Rue de la Harpe, where, on the night of May 31st, 1793, she had been torn from her mother's arms. The verification of the contents of the flat took place on January 7th, 1795. Notwithstanding the laconicism of the

<sup>1</sup> It still exists at the Château de Cocquetot.

## THE DEATH OF ROLAND

inventories, they give us some idea of what the young girl's feelings must have been on entering that apartment, full of relics of her parents. Her mother's summer dresses were still hanging in the wardrobes: "two dresses *en chemise*, one in linon and the other in coarse muslin; a cap in linon trimmed with lace; a dress *en chemise* in striped taffetas and a *déshabillé* in piqué, both of them old; two trimmed muslin dressing-gowns; two pairs of corsets, one in muslin, the other in linon, and both the worse for wear; a *piecrot* in flesh-coloured taffetas, etc."<sup>1</sup> Passing to the wardrobe in which the austere Roland kept his clothes, there were found "two old round hats, two old pairs of shoes, and a pair of worn black breeches . . ." Bosc obtained for the child the right of keeping out of the sale any objects she required for her personal use, so Eudora chose "two little medallions with engraved heads; a pencil portrait under glass in a gilt frame"; some furniture, linen, and the Erard piano, which had been given to her, it appeared, on January 1st, 1793, as a New Year's gift.<sup>2</sup>

This heritage came in the nick of time. Guardian and ward were almost without a bite to eat—an inconvenience which Bosc hardly felt at all, being passionately in love. He had loved the mother so deeply that he quite naturally came to have an affection for Eudora. She was barely fourteen years of age, whereas he was on the verge of forty. Someone, doubtless, made him see that he really ought to wait until the child was of an age to reason before declaring himself, for he immediately asked Mlle. Malortie, who had been out of prison since the 9th of Thermidor, to come to Paris and on her doing so placed the girl under her charge.

This was at the end of November 1795. In order to reach Rouen, Eudora had to pass along the Bourg-Bardouin road, within thirty yards of the ditch into which Roland's body had been thrown. She lived in the flat in the Rue aux Ours which her father had left to commit suicide.<sup>3</sup> Everybody, in those days, lived in the midst of tragic recollections: and

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Seine. Domaines: 124-344.*

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Seine. Domaines: 124-344.*

<sup>3</sup> Perroud, Appendix D.

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people had become so accustomed to them that they were no longer disturbed by phantasms.

As to the ever amorous Bosc, he decided to leave the country, and as he was without resources he set out on foot for Bordeaux, where he embarked on a sailing vessel for America. When he returned to France two years later he was still suffering from his chronic complaint : but during his absence friends had hurriedly married Eudora, who had become Mme. Champagneux.

Bosc died in 1823. His wish was to be buried at his beloved Hermitage of Sainte-Radegonde, in the Forest of Montmorency. Eudora Roland survived him thirty years : she died in Paris, in the Rue de Fleurus, on July 19th, 1858.

## THREE CHOUANS

### I

#### LIMOËLAN

CITIZEN LECLERC, pastrycook, Rue Neuve-Saint-Roch, at the corner of the Rue des Moineaux, was—during the last weeks of the year 1800—a very much astonished man.

To lighten his rent, he had let a room in his flat to a young Breton, who had been recommended by a customer. This Breton who had come to Paris to request the Minister of Police to strike his name off the list of *émigrés*, was the Chevalier Joseph Picot de Limoëlan. He was thirty-two years old, rather slim, and of a good figure, with a very long and thin face, aquiline nose, a dimpled chin, good teeth, and a high forehead. Like most short-sighted people, his eyes were large, and he habitually wore spectacles.<sup>1</sup> He was irreproachably dressed—frock-coat, blue trousers, well-varnished boots, hat with a mother-of-pearl buckle. But what frightened the pastrycook was that his lodger, at his first appearance, had jet-black hair and a clean-shaven face, but the next day his hair was flaxen and done into plaits on

<sup>1</sup> "Picot de Limoëlan, alias Beaumont, alias 'For-the-King,' one of the authors of the attempt of the 3rd of Nivôse, is 34 to 35 years old, height five feet two or three inches, fair hair, chestnut eyebrows, blue eyes, hair done *à la Titus*; long nose, arched in the middle and rather aquiline; tolerably good figure, white skin, thin face, very short-sighted, body slender but not too thin. A nice-looking man of good appearance; well dressed, very clean linen, round hat, and boots." (Extract from descriptions of individuals wanted by the police, Pluviôse, Year XII.—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6326.)



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the temples. Two days later it was chestnut, and in another week bushy whiskers had covered his cheeks. Leclerc, however, had seen something of revolutions, and he kept his astonishment to himself, "being afraid of giving trouble to the Government."<sup>1</sup>

The Chevalier de Limoëlan was one of those gentlemen who, ever since their twentieth year, had been mixed up in the Breton *chouannerie*, had led the adventurous life of partisans, had known nights without sleep and winters without shelter, had been proscribed, hunted down, outlawed, and had become bandits. He had often fought against the Blues, occasionally attacked a *diligence*—a sport much in favour in the days of the Directoire—and had conspired, as everybody did in those times.<sup>2</sup> After the pacification of the Vendée, he grew wiser, and told everybody he longed to lead a regular life. He averred that he had submitted to the laws, that he admired Bonaparte, and that the only persons whose society he cared for were repentant Royalists and devout ladies who knew nothing of politics.<sup>3</sup>

In Paris—still faint and weary from the effects of the Revolutionary cataclysm—there were at that time many curious characters; ghosts of the old *régime*, just arrived

<sup>1</sup> Archives of the Prefecture of Police. Documents concerning the Infernal Machine Affair.

<sup>2</sup> "Picot de Lamoëlan was arrested in the Year II. or III. in the neighbourhood of Avranches. He went by the name of Durand at that time, and was going, he said, to Paris to claim an estate of his father's in the department of Côtes-du-Nord, and which had been confiscated. An amnesty having been granted to the rebels—of whom he acknowledged he had been one—he was set at liberty. He frequented the houses of Mme. de Clinchamp and Mme. Hêlouin d'Anjou, who always received him as one of the victims of the party they supported."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6387.

<sup>3</sup> "The Chevalier de Limoëlan to the Citizen Minister of General Police, the 12th of Frimaire, Year IX. :

"By the kind manner in which you have expressed your dissatisfaction . . . I am led to believe that you expect me to justify myself. Although I have not been treated by the Government in a way to inspire my confidence—for my name has not been struck off the list, though I was positively assured it should be—I am not insane enough to underrate its power, nor, consequently, to conspire against it.

"I am not sufficiently acquainted with the complaints you have against me to be able to reply to them, but I assure you, Citizen Minister, that I desire nothing but absolute tranquillity, and if I remain in Paris it is because I am afraid I could not obtain that in Brittany."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6455.



LIMOELAN.

*(Photo of a bust at the Château de Limoelan.—By permission of COMTE DE CHAMPLAIN.)*



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from Eisenach or Jersey: *émigrés* sick of exile and delighted to get a garret in the city in which they once owned well-appointed houses: noble dowagers still harping on their griefs, and inconsolable for the world they had survived: all these seeking out each other, meeting together, bemoaning in common their wants, their sorrows and their hates, like scared, shipwrecked sailors cast on a desert island. It was said that the Marquise de Saint-Pierre, when she came to Paris from London, where she had passed eight years, was met on her arrival by her grandson, who at once began to *maquer* her: the new France had no attractions for the dowager, and she went straight back to England.

But many of those who had come back were not so fastidious: the majority of them quickly learned to resume their old habits: they helped each other, they chattered together, and they looked favourably on Bonaparte. Not knowing his ambition—whom the King, as soon as he was restored, would not hesitate to create Constable of France, or a marquis as a reward for his services in the cause of order and religion. Silently and hesitatingly, like the efforts of a sick man regaining health, this bygone world formed itself *à son*. Nuns, who had been persecuted ever since the 10th of August, 1792, ventured to come forth, and assembled together to supply each other's necessities. Mother Marie Anne Dapont, of the order of Saint-Michel, had met with one of her *sœurs*, and assisted by a pious lady, Mlle. Adélaïde de Cicé,<sup>1</sup> she had hired an old building and a *chapelle* in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. There they collected together some of her old companions who had been dispersed, and who now, broken down in health and *mal en* mind, were glad to find a shelter *contre les rigueurs* of the attempt at convent life: a convent so *paucière* that they went to bed at five o'clock in the winter to save candles, and one of the ladies called the others to supper by going into the courtyard and clapping her hands. There *Adèle* de Cicé—the former Bishop of Auxerre and the other ex-Archbishop of Bordeaux and both *émigrés*—had not left Paris since 1791. At the

<sup>1</sup> Trial of Carbon and Saint-Romain.

## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

time of the Consulate she was fifty-one years of age. With that superb indifference which souls really dissociated from the things of this world profess for mere vulgar political events, it might be truly said that she never knew there had been a revolution. At dawn, every day, in the midst of the Terror, she left her house in the Rue Cassette and toddled to the far end of the faubourgs seeking for sick folks to tend, wounds to bind, or wants to relieve. She boldly entered the houses of the rich, even of declared Jacobins, and got from them money, *assignats*, or old linen, which she soon distributed. She neither concealed her noble name nor her aristocratic relationship; she never thought of deserting her poor in order to shield herself from a possible arrest; and although she was known in every hovel of the faubourgs, and went as freely amongst the advanced patriots as she did amongst the proscribed royalists, no one ever thought of denouncing her. When, in order to flatter her, some of those whom she assisted grumbled about hard times, she replied: "We never meddle with those matters; they do not concern women." One of the Terrorists, menaced by the reaction after Thermidor, said: "If they trouble me I shall take refuge with Citoyenne Cicé, and am sure to be well received."<sup>1</sup> This angelic woman so little thought of posing for posterity that history has forgotten her; it is only by piecing together a few stray details that it is now possible to give an imperfect sketch of her.

Amongst the spiritual advisers of Adelaïde de Cicé was a Jesuit father, aged, in 1800, sixty-five years. Pierre Joseph Picot de Clorivière had come to Paris in the early days of the

<sup>1</sup> "Never since I have known the accused (de Cicé) have I seen her do anything but kindnesses; she fed my children, and sent money to my son, who was in the army. One day, when she returned home, she saw a poor woman in a doorway, and sent her something to eat. She bound up wounds with her own hands; she did so to my husband."—*Statement of Widow Kerne.*

"I had a finger so bad that no one would come near me. I met a woman in the street, who said to me, 'You ought to go and see Citoyenne de Cicé.' I went to Rue Cassette; she received me, bound up my finger, washed my hand, and gave me some linen. I said to her, 'Madame, shall I come here to-morrow?' She replied, 'No, you are in too much pain!' She came to my house three times a day for a month. She is not dead after by everybody."—*Statement of Mme. Guillebert.*

## THREE CHOUANS

Republic for the very unexpected purpose of reconstituting the Society of Jesus, which, as everybody knows, had been dissolved in 1762. To be affiliated to this congregation it was necessary to be either a widower or a bachelor, a widow or a spinster—for the association included the faithful of both sexes—and pronounce, after a novitiate of variable length, vows of poverty, charity, and obedience. The “initiated” were intended to take the place of the religious orders which the Revolution had dispersed; they were under an obligation to spend no more for their support than was strictly necessary, and to apply the remainder of their resources to works of charity and compassion. Father de Clorivière had resided in Paris, regardless of danger, through all the period of the Revolution, forming “a nucleus of ten men and four women,” who were charged to make—with due precautions—fresh recruits. He had even appointed a General and a Lady Superior, whose names remain unknown. The Society, moreover, was under the direct patronage of the Pope, and recognised St. Ignatius de Loyola as its protector.

Father de Clorivière, who was quite as indifferent as his faithful acolyte, Mlle. de Cicé, to everything but the object of his mission, was the uncle and godfather of Chevalier de Limoëlan. Through him the young Chouan had been presented to several pious families, and professed to be attached to the church. Limoëlan’s mother and sisters lived at Versailles, and he was engaged to a young woman of that town, who was to be married to him as soon as his name had been struck off the list of *émigrés*. He had taken the usual steps necessary for this purpose as soon as he was settled in pastry-cook Leclerc’s house. His submission to the new order of things was complete and unreserved, as we may see from the letter already quoted.

But the Chevalier de Limoëlan had another motive for residing in Paris besides a desire for “the most absolute tranquillity”—he had come for the purpose of assassinating the First Consul.

He had made this purpose known to one of his old Chouan companions, named Saint-Réjant. Their first

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plan was to post themselves a few paces apart, near Malmaison, and shoot Bonaparte at short range. But the Consul never travelled except in a closed carriage,—shot-proof, it was said—and surrounded by a numerous escort, with drawn sabres, who kept all bystanders at a distance. It was necessary therefore to find some means of blowing up escort and carriage at the same time—and such a plan the two accomplices set to work to contrive.

Money was not wanting, and a ready tool was found—an old Chouan named Carbon, who had been Limoëlan's servant, and whose principal source of income was derived from attacking public conveyances. All three took a part in the arrangements. On the 17th of December Carbon went to Lambel, a seed-merchant in the Rue Meslée, who had a horse and cart to sell—a light, two-wheeled cart with high sides, and barely five feet long, and a little, black mare, hardly bigger than a pony, old, and foundered. Carbon bought the cart and mare for 200 francs, money down, and took them to a stable which had been previously hired, at No. 19 Rue Paradis, by the walls of Saint-Lazare. He gave out that he was a hawker, and that the cart was to be used to carry the Laval linens he sold.

The days of the 22nd and 23rd December—1st and 2nd of Nivôse of the Year IX.—were employed in preparations. A cask, strongly bound with iron, was placed upright in the cart and covered by a tarpaulin supported on hoops. On the 3rd of Nivôse, about five o'clock, Carbon and Limoëlan came to the Rue Paradis, both clad in blue blouses like those worn by carters. Carbon harnessed the horse to the cart, and Limoëlan led it through the faubourg to the Porte St.-Denis, where he halted. Two men, whose names did not transpire at the trial, were waiting there, and they took the cask out of the cart and carried it towards the Rue Saint-Martin, where Carbon's sister, the Citoyenne Vallon, a laundress, lived. Half an hour later they reappeared, accompanied by Saint-Réjant, and dragging a hand-barrow, on which was the cask, now full of powder, and so heavy that they had great difficulty in getting it into the cart. The two unknown men then went away: Limoëlan, Carbon, and Saint-Réjant took

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the cart down the Rue Neuve Egalité (now Rue d'Aboukir), Limoëlan leading the horse by the bridle. The other two, as they walked along, picked up "all the flints and pebbles they could find," and threw them into the cart.

At the Place des Victoires, Carbon left his companions, who went through the Rue Croix des Petits Champs, Rue St.-Honoré and Rue de Malte, to the Carrousel. They arrived there about seven o'clock. The evening was dark, damp, and foggy.

The Place du Carrousel was not then as large as it is now; almost on the spot where the monument to Gambetta now stands was the long front of the old Hôtel Longueville, then used as the Consul's stables, facing the Tuileries and extending to the Rue Saint-Nicaise, the first few houses of which projected into the Place. Opposite the wall of the hôtel, a few steps from the Carrousel, Limoëlan and Saint-Réjant stopped the cart, raised the tarpaulin, and laid a slow match, one end of which was in the cask and the other projecting from under the cart-cover.

The First Consul was to go to the Opéra, in the Rue de la Loi, that night, to hear the first performance of Haydn's oratorio, *Saul*, which was to begin at eight o'clock. There was nearly an hour to wait, and the two Chouans, like two idlers, began to stroll up and down the street. In front of the Hôtel Longueville was the window of a café, in which some ten or twelve customers were peacefully talking or playing cards; beyond that was the shop of the breeches-maker Beirlé, inside which was a woman, with a salad bowl on her knees, preparing vegetables. At the corner of the Rue de Malte and the Rue Nicaise, at the Café d'Apollon, kept by Mme. Léger, a score of customers were sitting. Further on were a wine-shop and a cook-shop. Cafés and shops were doing a good business, for the 3rd of Nivôse corresponded to December 24th, and even when there was no midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, Paris had carefully preserved the tradition of the *réveillon*, and people were laying in provisions for the customary supper.

It was now half-past seven. Limoëlan and Saint-Réjant separated; the former, posted at the corner of the Carrousel,



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was to signal the arrival of the Consul to his companion, who, with a pipe well alight in his mouth, was to set fire to the match, which, it was calculated, would burn six or seven seconds—time enough for Saint-Réjant to reach the corner of the Rue de Malte, where he would be shielded from the explosion. The moment approached: he turned the mare and placed her with her head to the wall of the hôtel, so that the cart was half way across the street: as an additional precaution he accosted a girl of thirteen or fourteen years of age, who chanced to pass, and offered her twelve *sous* if she would hold the horse for a minute. The child consented.<sup>1</sup> There were still a few minutes to wait.

Eight o'clock struck. The escort of cavalry emerged from the Tuileries courtyard: Saint-Réjant watched for the signal which Limoëlan ought to have given—but Limoëlan did not move. Already the Grenadiers of the Guard were approaching at a smart trot: and entered the Rue Saint-Nicaise. Saint-Réjant taken by surprise, seized the match, and applied the end of it to his pipe.

What happened? Not one of the hundred and twenty witnesses called at the trial could say; not one of the persons passing in the street heard the explosion, though it was heard a very long way from Paris. All who were on the spot were thrown down, killed, mangled: glass, beams, tiles, shop-fronts, bricks, stones, window-sills were hurled over all the district, and fell again with a terrible crash. The Consul's carriage had passed—how, no one knows. It had nearly reached the Théâtre Français when the explosion occurred, but, in spite of the distance it swayed over as though it had been in a hurricane;<sup>2</sup> all the escort who accompanied it felt themselves lifted out of their saddles.

<sup>1</sup> The girl's name was Pensol; her mother sold rolls in the Rue du Bac. The unfortunate child was blown to pieces by the explosion. Her mother was examined at the trial. "I know nothing," she said, "except that my daughter was passing by the Rue Nicaise, and I have been told by several persons. I do not know that she was given twelve *sous* to mind the horse." Q. "Did you see the remains of your daughter?" A. "They would not let me; they were shown to my brother." Q. "How old was she?" A. "Fourteen." Q. "Have you heard that she was blown limb from limb?" A. "Yes, citizen."—*Trial of Carion and Saint-Réjant.*

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Grenadier Durand at the trial.

THE  
RELATIVE



THE INFERNAL MACHINE.



### THREE CHOUANS

In front of the Hôtel Longueville the spectacle was terrible. Shapeless corpses lay amongst the ruins ; groans of anguish issued from the gutted houses. The Café d'Apollon was a field of carnage ; the wounded dragged their mangled bodies along the muddy pavement in the foggy night. Some of them were naked, their clothes having been stripped off by the force of the explosion ; others had been blinded and shrieked in horror and despair ; others had gone mad, and laughed hideously. And no one knew whence the blow had fallen : cart, horse, and girl had all disappeared.

It has often been stated that public opinion accused some of the Jacobins, who were known as " Robespierre's tail," of the crime ; but it is also known that Fouché, who was better informed, accused the Royalists of the attempt. On the morrow—Christmas Day—wholesale arrests, made haphazard, began throughout terror-stricken Paris, and this gave a temporary satisfaction to the popular indignation, but cunning old stagers of the police were well aware that they were on a false scent ; not one of the individuals imprisoned knew the guilty parties, to whom there was no clue. Nearly a month went by before the inquiry, though vigorously carried on, achieved any result.

Saint-Réjant made off as soon as he had lighted the match. He also " saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing." He was hurled, he did not know how, under the wicket of the gallery of the Louvre, where the fresh air revived him, " and he came to himself." He ran to the Pont Royal, made his blouse into a bundle and threw it into the river ; then, by a circuitous route, he made his way to the Rue des Prouvaires, where he occupied a furnished room in the house of Citoyenne Leguiloux, the wife of a postman. It was nine o'clock when Saint-Réjant knocked at the door ; his landlady opened it, and he slipped by her in the dark, without saying a word, and staggered upstairs to his room. An hour later, Limoëlan came to the house. " Has your lodger returned ? " he asked, anxiously, and on receiving an affirmative reply, he went up to his friend's room. A minute later he reappeared. " He is very ill, very ill, indeed," he said ; " he must have a confessor."

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Mme. Leguilloux asked what was the matter. "He was thrown down," replied Limoëlan, "and a horse trod on him. I am going to find a confessor." "A doctor would be better," said the woman.

Limoëlan left, and about eleven o'clock returned, bringing his uncle, Father de Clorivière, whom he had found preparing to celebrate midnight Mass in the secret oratory of a private house.

Whilst the priest was hearing the confession of the wounded man—what an avowal he had to make!—a doctor arrived, Dr. Colin, a Breton,<sup>1</sup> who some days previously had treated Saint-Réjant for pneumonia. He questioned the sick man, who in a weak voice replied, "I fell down," and could say no more; he was spitting blood and his breathing was oppressed. The doctor bled him and that appeared to give relief. At ten the next morning he was much better; Colin found him seated near the fire, warming himself. That same day Saint-Réjant left the Rue des Prouvaires and went to a room that had been hired a month before in the house of Citoyenne Jourdan, a mender of silk stockings, in the Rue d'Aguesseau. He stayed there twenty days. One morning, two nuns came to Mme. Jourdan and handed her a roll of 500 francs for her lodger from M. de Limoëlan. That evening Saint-Réjant left the Rue d'Aguesseau and never returned.

The police made inquiries; they had collected some fragments of the black mare, picked up in the Rue Saint-Nicaise, and they called together all the horse-dealers of Paris to examine the remains. They thus obtained from the seed-merchant, Lambel, a description of Carbon, for whom twenty detectives were sent in search, but without success—for a very good reason. For, on the 7th of Nivôse, Limoëlan, who was more anxious for the safety of his accomplices than for his own, came to fetch Carbon, who had taken refuge with his sister, Mme. Vallon, and conducted him by night through a terrific downpour of rain—which no doubt prevented the police from being abroad—to Mlle. de Cicé, in the Rue Cassette. She was disposed to do anything for the nephew of Father de Clorivière, and confided Carbon for

<sup>1</sup> Colin was the brother of Colin, *alias* Cupidon, a celebrated Chouan.

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twenty-four hours—until something better could be found—to a neighbour, Mme. Gouyon de Beaufort, and, on the evening of the 9th, she took him to the convent of Mother Marie Anne Duquesne in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs.

Can it be believed that all these charitable ladies were ignorant of the charge brought against their guest? Father de Clorivière certainly knew, but, no doubt, he had but to say the word, and all of them were ready to open their doors—more especially Mlle. de Cicé, for she had vowed to obey him. In all probability she never made any inquiries, nor did the good sisters either; a hint sufficed for them that their visitor was “a worthy man whose papers were not in order,” and they imagined they were sheltering some refractory priest hunted down by the police. The nuns were the more willing to help, because the name of Mlle. de Cicé was worth any number of references, but the poor ladies had not in their wretched convent any place where they could lodge the refugee. It chanced, however, that one of the sisters—Mlle. Firmin—had died that day, so, as soon as the sheets on the bed could be changed, Carbon was installed in the dead woman’s cell.

He lived there, quietly and well-treated, until the end of January 1801, attending all the services in order to pass the time, and piously assisting at the solemn *Te Deums* which the sisters chanted to thank Heaven for having preserved the Consul’s life. But the dull life of the cloisters did not half please him, and he was so bored that he at last ventured outside the convent doors. That was his ruin; he was recognised and followed by a police-agent, who came to arrest him at the convent on Sunday, the 18th of January. At the same time, they arrested Mother Duquesne, who was clapping her hands, all by herself, in the middle of the courtyard—which was evidently a signal to some accomplice, the police thought, whereas the good woman was in reality only summoning her little flock to Mass. Carbon was taken to the Temple prison that same evening, and the nuns, Mme. Gouyon de Beaufort, her two daughters, Marie Françoise and Marie Aubine, Mme. Vallon, Limoëlan’s mother and sisters, who had been arrested at Versailles, and Mlle. de Cicé, were all lodged in the

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Madelonnettes. Ten days later, a patrol met Saint-Réjant in the Rue du Four. For nearly a week he had been wandering about the city, being afraid to enter a house.<sup>1</sup> He was dragged off to the Temple, where, in the course of the night, he was joined by Leguilloux and his wife; the pastry-cook, Leclerc; Dr. Colin, and Mme. Jourdan. The examinations proved that Limoëlan was the ringleader of the attempt; his capture seemed to be only a question of hours, but, though no man ever had such a pack on his trail, and every police-spy in Paris was expecting a stroke of good fortune, he continued to keep free.

Mlle. de Cicé was heroic. She knew, we may suspect, the retreat of the young Chouan; at all events, she knew where Father de Clorivière, of whom she was the devoted and faithful agent, was to be found, and he also long contrived to throw the hounds of the law off the scent.<sup>2</sup> A few pieces of gold were found in her house, wrapped in a paper on which was written, "Money belonging to those gentlemen." What gentlemen? Royalists? Conspirators? She would say nothing, and wore out the patience, cunning, and obstinacy of Réal, Limodin, and Desmarets, the cleverest and most cunning of Fouché's assistants. Even the terrible M. Pasques, the gigantic police-officer whose commanding appearance and astuteness disconcerted the most wily criminals, owned himself beaten by the placid resignation of this old maid, for whose release all the poor people of the quarter were loudly clamouring. Fouché was compelled to make it known—he had emissaries in every camp—that if Limoëlan would give himself up his life should be spared. But Limoëlan replied—through Bourmont, it is said—that he placed no confidence in the Minister's word, and, moreover, had nothing to reveal.

On April 1st the accused appeared before the Criminal

<sup>1</sup> Q. "Where did you sleep?" A. "I slept out of doors, I wandered to and fro."—*Trial*.

<sup>2</sup> Father de Clorivière was not arrested until the 15th of Floréal, Year XII. (5th May, 1804). He was imprisoned in the Temple, where he remained till the Tower was pulled down; he was then transferred to the donjon of Vincennes and afterwards obtained permission to be removed to Buisson's asylum in the Faubourg St.-Antoine. See *Le R. P. de Clorivière*, by Father Terrier.

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Court, which condemned Carbon and Saint-Réjant to death. The others were acquitted, though the mother and sisters of Limoëlan were kept some time in prison. But they showed a complete ignorance of the affair, and victoriously proved that they were such admirers of the First Consul that they used to walk from Versailles every week to see him review the troops. They were at last set at liberty.

Limoëlan was never found.

Fouché's agents, vexed by their want of success, pretended that the police had always known where the young Chouan was hidden. This was not true; he was most zealously sought for until the proprietor of Vigier's baths came forward to declare that on the night of the explosion, about two in the morning, a man had thrown himself into the river from the Pont Royal. Citizen Charles, who was employed as stoker at the baths, "put out in a boat to rescue the poor wretch, whom he could hear struggling in the water and breathing heavily, but was not able to lay hold of him."<sup>1</sup> A search for the body of the drowned man proved fruitless, but the police willingly concluded that Limoëlan had committed suicide. This supposition satisfied their professional pride, but was, however, quite erroneous. At the time when his accomplices were being tried, Limoëlan had, thanks to the influence of Father de Clorivière, found a refuge in the deserted vaults of the church of Saint-Laurent; and remained there four months, it is believed. It was not until May that he dared to leave his hiding-place, quit Paris and go to Brittany, where, it is said, he scarcely troubled to conceal himself.<sup>3</sup>

"Devout as well as proud, and deeming that his act was

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Prefecture of Police.*

<sup>2</sup> "M. de Clorivière—that is the name which Limoëlan took—was within an inch of losing his life; tracked and almost run down by vile men, he assumed various disguises, for his face and figure had been seen on many battlefields, and he was well known to both parties. He hid himself for some time in Brittany, then in Vendée. Once—having no choice—he dressed as a dandy, and, swishing his cane, passed coolly though the ranks of the soldiers who were looking for him."—Extract from the MS. Annals of the "Visitation," at Georgetown, Columbia. These valuable documents were communicated by M. de Sumichrast, Professor at Harvard University, Boston.



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by the will of God, he would not submit to the judgment of men," and he trusted in Heaven to protect him. The fact is that, ever since the night of the crime, a change had come over his mind; piety had deepened into mysticism. Father de Clorivière—who was, no doubt, the author of this spiritual change—alone could tell us what were the stages of this conversion. The first was remorse—a remorse born in Limoëlan's heart at the very moment of the crime, for it has been declared that when he saw the Consul's escort leaving the Tuileries he did not give the signal for which his accomplice was waiting. Saint-Réjant, therefore, did not know the carriage was coming until it was in sight; he also confessed to Father de Clorivière that, as he lighted the match, "he addressed a prayer to God to ask Him to turn aside the blow if Bonaparte was necessary to the safety of France." These astounding twinges of conscience call to mind Bonald's saying: "Foolish things done by sensible people—foolish things said by witty people—crimes committed by honest people—these make up the whole of the Revolution."

The second stage of Limoëlan's penitence was a cruel disappointment in love. After he had been about a year in Brittany he learned that the young woman to whom he was to be married, who had remained at Versailles, and whom he ardently loved, and who had vowed to become a nun if he escaped the scaffold, had kept her word and taken the veil.<sup>1</sup> Overcome with despair, Limoëlan went to Saint-Malo, and engaged himself as a common sailor on a merchant

<sup>1</sup> "Joseph de Limoëlan managed to escape. The family of his *fiancée* provided for his safety; then he withdrew into Brittany where he wandered from hiding-place to hiding-place, sometimes concealed in the Château de Limoëlan, at other times at Sévignac, or in the neighbourhood. He could hardly hope to be always able to avoid the police, but a fortunate circumstance happened. A Breton gentleman, M. de Chappedelaine, sought in marriage Mlle. Marie Thérèse de Limoëlan, the sister of the refugee. There were difficulties in the way, but M. de Chappedelaine's uncle died in the United States, and left all his fortune to his nephew on condition that he married Mlle. de Limoëlan. The young couple went to America to take possession of their property, and Limoëlan accompanied them disguised as a servant. It was time he did, for several domiciliary visits had taken place, and had only been unsuccessful because the police did not search Mme. de Chappedelaine's bedroom, where her brother lay hidden.

"Before he went away, Joseph de Limoëlan wrote to the young lady to whom he was engaged to propose that she should accompany him to America and be married there, but if she did not wish to take that journey, he would

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In the United States they did not know—and still do not know—his real identity and the part he had played in history. He inscribed himself on the books of the seminary at Baltimore as Clorivière, and it was under that name that he received the tonsure, during Lent, 1807. There was a legend, however, concerning him, for it was known that he had taken an active share in the events of the Revolution in France, and it was rumoured that he was “a *Bourbon* who had miraculously escaped from Bonaparte’s prison.” When questioned, he replied that “God by a miracle had twice given him his life.” More than that he never said, but he wore the Cross of St. Louis, which “the brothers of Louis XVI. had sent him,” he said, “in 1800.” On the 1st of August, 1812, he was ordained priest, and the Archbishop of Baltimore, Mgr. Carroll, appointed him *curé* of Charleston, South Carolina,—an unlucky choice, for the people of Charleston, then hardly civilised, evinced ultra-revolutionary tendencies, and a priest who was a French *émigré*, and an avowed friend to the Bourbons, was badly received. His charity and kindness could not overcome these prejudices. His sermons were hooted, he was insulted whilst saying Mass, and was obliged to confine his ministrations to teaching small children their Catechism. One day, in the summer of 1814, a newspaper arrived in Charleston announcing the fall of Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourbons. Limoëlan, exultant, and intoxicated with joy, could not refrain from uttering an enthusiastic cry of “Vive le Roi” in the open street—for which his flock shot at him three times, and talked about lynching him.<sup>1</sup>

A Catholic family gave him shelter but he felt discouraged, and begged of his superiors to relieve him of his functions. He Like the previous one it was dated from the seminary of Saint Mary, near Baltimore (9th August). “The same determination to become a priest, in spite of the great difficulty of the studies. He had received the tonsure last Lent. Though I should remain at the portal of the Church in the state in which I now am, I should consider that a more precious gift than anything the world can offer. I want no other happiness than to do God’s will.” He asks about religion in France. “We receive,” he says, “very sad reports, which make us fear that you are on the edge of an abyss.” —Bulletin of 28th October, 1807. National Archives, AF<sup>IV</sup>, 1507.

<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by Mme. Sumichrast from the papers of the Abbess of the Convent. “He announced the glorious news from the pulpit, and caused a solemn *Te Deum* to be sung in the Church.”



THE INFERNAL MACHINE.

(From a print in the possession of Baron de Vicer.)



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longed to return to France, his berth was taken and his luggage on board a ship about to sail for Havre, when a pious person begged him "not to leave a country where the need of priests was so cruelly felt, and to accept the position of director of the Sisters of the Visitation at Georgetown."

Limoëlan—or rather Father de Clorivière, for it is under that name only that he is remembered in the United States—deemed that such a sacrifice would be a fitting penance. He bowed his head, accepted the proffered position, and never again saw Brittany. By the sale of his property he raised a little money, by the aid of which he built a chapel, which is still standing and which is full of "sacred ornaments, pictures, and *ex voto* sent him by Louis XVIII., Charles X., and other illustrious friends of France." The nuns of the Visitation looked upon their almoner as a saint<sup>1</sup> and little

<sup>1</sup> M. de Sumichrast has obtained from the lady-superior of the Visitation at Georgetown, the copy of the MS. Annals of the Convent. We sincerely thank the eminent professor of Harvard University for his assistance; this contribution to the history of Limoëlan is so valuable that it deserves to be quoted in full.

"It was the 13th of January, a Tuesday, the day of the octave of the Epiphany, that he arrived. It was noon of a day of profession. The three 'spouses' wore their wreaths, and waited along with Mother Teresa and the community, in the great hall, for the dinner hour. Mother Teresa was fetched out of the hall, but she hardly suspected for what reason, and a few moments later she re-appeared accompanied by a strange priest. The sisters already knew Father Clorivière by reputation; the Archbishop had told them his name, had spoken of his virtues, and had commanded them to have for him who would in future be their father in Christ, that filial love and confidence which they had for their Archbishop. It is easy to imagine what was their emotion when they knelt to receive his blessing, murmuring to themselves, 'Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.' When they rose, Father Clorivière said a few words and withdrew.

"A postulant, who was just seventeen years old—Sister Geneviève King—formed part of this happy group, and from her I learned these details.

"The Sisters found again in the new spiritual father all that they had lost in Archbishop Neale—a father, a friend, a holy spiritual guide. The high esteem in which he was held by Archbishop Neale made us prepared to receive him favourably. He has done, and continues to do for us, more than it is possible to state in a letter. He has given himself to us—or rather, as he so well says—God has given us him, and all that we have in the world, without our being able to make Him the least return. He inspires, assists, and encourages us in all things; in a word, he is really a father to us, and our interests become his. (Circular letter of 1822.)

"It was with mutual pleasure that Mother Teresa and our new spiritual father made the arrangements necessary for him to take possession of his post. At that time the community numbered about thirty-five persons. Father Clorivière was in his fiftieth year, but worn out by endless labours, and fatigued by the struggles he had gone through; from the age of twenty

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short of a martyr ; for, although he was several years short of his sixtieth birthday, he looked like an old man—broken he had fought on many battlefields. He gratefully welcomed the peaceful solitude which God had granted him for his declining years. The good Father was glad to find that in spiritual matters the convent was flourishing. But in temporal affairs it was not the same. He showed his interest in the spiritual by doing all he could to increase in the Sisters a knowledge of what was needed to make them perfect. His great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the zeal he manifested in propagating that devotion, made him delight in the life and revelations of the Blessed Marguerite-Marie.

“ He built our beautiful chapel of the Sacred Heart. The picture on the great altar, which represents Our Lord in the house of Martha and Mary, was given to Father Clorivière by Charles X., and painted by the King’s command for that purpose.

“ Father Clorivière having been for nearly nine years confessor and director of the community, and having accomplished everything, spiritual and temporal, that could possibly be done for it, appeared to have finished his earthly task.

“ We may affirm that he was the second founder and benefactor of our American Visitation, for if Archbishop Neale, after eighteen years of long delays and the hardest struggles, had succeeded in founding the first community of our Order in the New World, it was Father Clorivière who prevented it from being dispersed. He it was who supported it when it tottered and was ready to fall, who sustained it during a terrible crisis, and established it definitely on a sure basis. He consolidated and rendered permanent the work begun by Archbishop Neale, he improved it spiritually and temporally, devoting to it his time, his strength, his energy and his fortune. He governed it both as a father and as a saint during times of trial, and,—when, like a ship without a pilot, it was buffeted by the waves,—he seized the helm and skilfully guided the trembling ship through the stormy waters. The community loved him like obedient and grateful children, and honoured him as Anney had honoured Saint François de Sales, so that when the fatal attack of paralysis occurred, all hearts were stricken with grief.

“ On May 6th, 1826, he fell when leaving the church after having said Mass. It was an attack : : : : : is taken, unconscious, to his apartment. Priests and . . . in attendance, giving all the assistance in their power. . . . gh the summer, and died on September 29th. His tongue was affected, but his brain remained clear. By means of signs he made known to those who surrounded him how he wished to be buried. He requested that he be laid to rest in the crypt of the convent (under the chapel of the Sacred Heart) and that his tomb should be used as a resting-place for the coffins of deceased Sisters during the funeral service. Without doubt this servant of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had felt the truth of those words, ‘ Oh, how sweet it is to die, after having been tenderly devoted to the Heart of Him who shall be our judge ! ’

“ The Holy Bishop Bruté, his intimate friend, remained by his bedside, repeating : ‘ My friend, my friend ! from the Cross to Heaven ! ’ It was, in fact, a supreme consolation, the greatest that the world can offer, to die in the presence,—it might be said, in the arms,—of a saint. Fortified by the sacraments and all the aid that the holy Church can give, surrounded by holy Jesuit and Sulpicien fathers, the Rev. Father Joseph Clorivière, with a clear mind and perfect peace of heart, rendered his soul to God on the day of the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, September 29th, 1826.”

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down, suffering, and haunted by bitter memories. Nothing could express, it appears, "the air of humble and fervent piety with which he officiated at the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve." For hours before the service began he remained prostrate in prayer before the altar, and no one suspected the tragic pilgrimage his mind must have been then making. His memory must have travelled back to the night of the 3rd of Nivôse, and there must have passed before his inner vision pictures of the Place du Carrousel, the cart with a tarpaulin cover, the girl holding the black mare, the garret where he had taken his uncle to the bedside of Saint-Réjant—and the scaffold on which his two friends had perished.

He died in September 1826, and was buried in the crypt of the chapel he had built. Fresh flowers and lighted candles have never been wanting to his tomb from that time to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following inscription is engraved on his tomb :

Here lies  
JOSEPH PIERRE PICOT DE CLORIVIÈRE  
Born of a noble family  
Of Brittany  
He earned an illustrious name in the military career  
The difficulties of the times  
And the will of Divine Providence  
Forced him to leave his native Land  
And embark for this country,  
Where he embraced the ecclesiastical vocation.  
Ordained priest,  
He exercised with indefatigable zeal the functions  
Of the holy ministry  
Firstly, in the Church of Saint Charleston ;  
Afterward appointed Director of the Visitation at Georgetown,  
He governed the Community confided to his care  
With consummate prudence,  
Eminent piety  
And charity that endured all proofs.  
A Church, an Academy and other edifices which he built  
Caused him to be called the second founder ;  
With never-failing ardour  
He, to his last breath, exerted the means  
To advance in the perfection of their calling  
And he gave to his instructions  
The solid support of his example.  
Finally, laden with good works,  
He peacefully fell asleep in the Lord  
The 25th September, 1826  
Aged 55 years

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## II

### BOISÉ-LUCAS

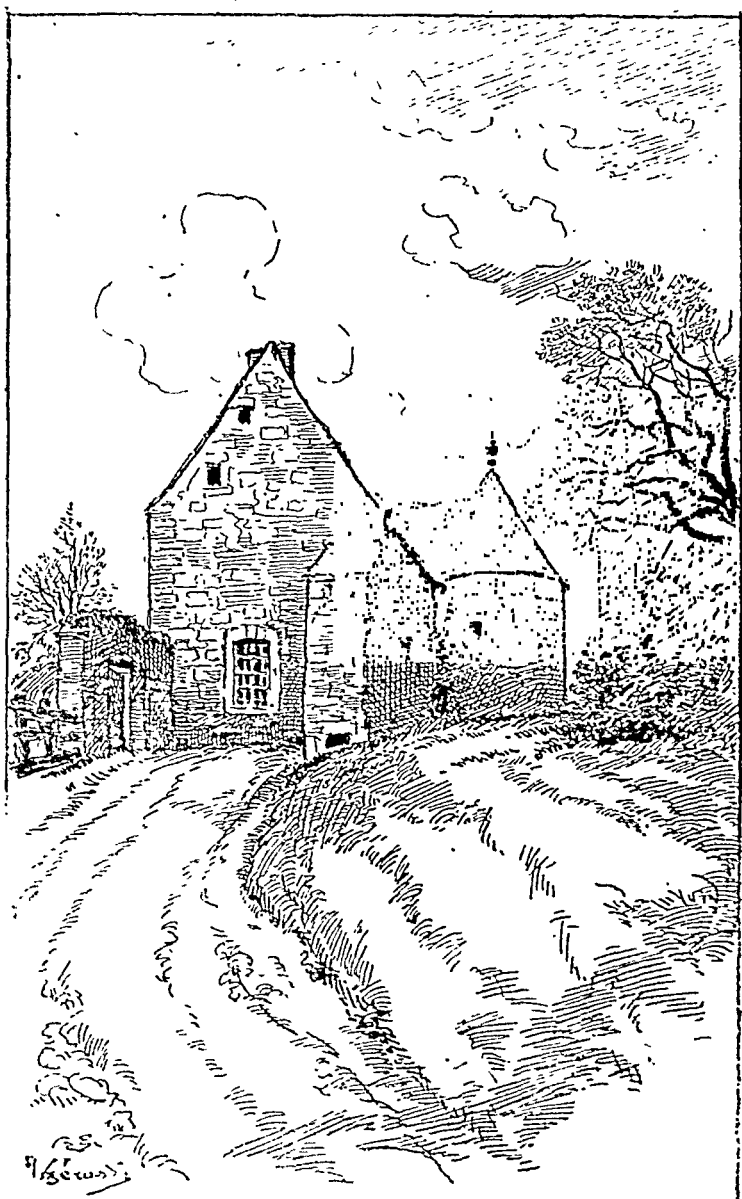
BOISÉ-LUCAS is the name of a Breton manor, hidden behind trees, near the coast, a league from Saint-Cast. At a hundred yards from the house you would never suspect its existence, and the peasants when asked its' whereabouts reply with a mischievous grin, which is as much as to say, "You will never find it." There is no road, only muddy alleys, impassable for carriages, between a couple of banks. It can be found at last, however, concealed by old, worn-out apple-trees, the branches of which are frosted over with a thick blue-grey lichen. The house has that endurable appearance common to Breton buildings; it is built of uneven rust-coloured granite chips, cemented together by a mortar as hard as iron; it has long, grey, slated roofs, and a projecting front, capped by a pepper-castor that pretends to look like a tower. The soil is wet with liquid manure. An enormous cider-mill, three centuries old, with a trough of pink stone, stands by the house, and around it is a muddy kitchen-garden, enclosed with stones stuck in the ground. Beyond this garden is a "chine," thick with oaks, pines, and elms—a bit of Druid forest—down which runs a break-neck path—a staircase without steps—that sometimes becomes a torrent. At the bottom of this dell is a low, square, verdure-covered mill, and behind the mill is the sea, its waves licking a narrow beach bounded on both sides by inaccessible rocks covered with gorse.

Such is Boisé-Lucas in its unchanging antiquity. The squireling who lived there in the beginning of the 19th century was named Marie Joseph Delaunai; but—according to immemorial usage in Brittany—he was known by the name of his estate—"Monsieur de Boisé-Lucas."

Being a prudent man of moderate views, he lived there, very peaceably, through all the worst years of the Revolution. The spot is so out-of-the-way and inaccessible that neither Chouans nor Blues had ever shown themselves in the



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BOISÉ-LUCAS.  
(A Sketch from Nature by Gérardin.)

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district, and M. de Boisé-Lucas had never thought of emigrating, although he was a Royalist—for convenience more than from conviction, perhaps—for he had even patriotically commanded, for some months, the Saint-Cast company of coastguard artillery. He was fifty-two years of age in 1808, a solidly built man, with a bald forehead, and what hair he had left turning grey, a short nose, and grey eyes. His wife, whom he had married at Plancoët in 1782, when she was barely seventeen years old, was named Maximilienne Bameule de Nantillais. She was rather conceited, it was said, proud of her “de,” dreamed of performing chivalric exploits, and ruled like a sovereign over her pig-styes and her cider-mill.

Their son, Maximilien—the peasants called him “Monsieur Maxime”—had grown up in this solitude; but, as his mother wished him to have the manners of a gentleman, she sent him to pass part of the year at Plancoët with his aunt, Mlle. de Nantillais.

Plancoët was an aristocratic centre; there were to be found there some venerable ladies from whom could be learned all the good old traditions and fine manners of the old Court, of which these noble dames thought they were the sole depositories. Amongst them were Mme. de Bédée, Mlle. de Ravenel de Boisteilleul, the three Mlles. Loisel de la Villedeneu, and several la Bouëtardais, de Gimgenés de Chateauneufs, and de Rosmadecs. These ladies—still trembling from the effects of the revolutionary whirlwind—used to meet every afternoon to interchange lamentations and regrets. The epic stories told at these meetings may be easily imagined:—exploits of heroic Chouans, hunted-down outlaws (noble as Duchess Ann, and handsome as the prince in a fairy tale) tumbling down the chimney at night, with a dagger between their teeth and their hands covered with blood, to be cared for and comforted by the white hands of some great lady, and, at dawn, starting off again on their adventurous career. All the stirring events of insurgent Brittany had become a romance of chivalry which haunted the imagination of these old ladies.

Young Maxime de Boisé-Lucas enjoyed freely these stories

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of a prowess which he never expected to imitate, for he was, on the whole, of a practical turn of mind. He studied law at Rennes, rarely appeared at Boisé-Lucas, which was a dull residence, and passed his holidays with his aunt. In 1808, when he was twenty-five years of age, he had a small mouth, long nose, small hands, brown hair, and an elegant figure. His good appearance, and his eloquence—partly borrowed—captivated the heart of a young woman who frequented the austere *salon* of Plancoët. The love-letters of the young lady are still in the *dossier*, although they bear the traditionally useless recommendation, “Burn these letters, I insist.” The careless fingers of archive-searchers now turn them over, and of all this old world now dissolved, and these people so old-fashioned that they seem almost prehistoric, there remains nothing young, living, and actual but these love-prattlings, which might have been written this morning. Beings and things pass away, but sentiments endure.

“I had imagined that you would be sensible enough not to insist on having that lock of hair, which, in a few months, will trouble you less than it did me to grant it. It would ill suit me to make a pretence of virtue about a trifle, when I have preserved but the shadow of it in so many other instances.”

On another page :

“You will no doubt think it strange that I write to you when I see you so often, but the sight of you so absorbs my ideas that I cannot say a word to you. I regard the blush which suffuses my face, when my eyes rest upon you, as a punishment for forgetting my duty. It is late ; you long, no doubt, for that repose of which you have deprived me.”

Perhaps it would not be impossible to discover the name of this conscience-stricken damsel ; but the highest refinement of curiosity is discretion, and no history is really interesting unless there is a smack of mystery about it.

On the 26th of September of this same year, 1808, M. de Boisé-Lucas, senior, was alone, about ten o'clock at night, in the parlour of his solitary manor. This parlour is a low, narrow room, with tiled floor, whitewashed walls. and two

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windows—one opening on the courtyard, and the other towards the ravine.

As M. de Bois  -Lucas was about to go up to his bedroom, he heard a tapping at the window—the only window at the gable-end of the house. He opened it, and saw a man whose leather trousers, woollen coat, and tall hat were soaked with mud and water. A dagger, “shining very brightly,” was in his belt. The man carried a valise “as big as his arm.” He gave his name in a low voice—*Armand de Chateaubriand!*—and at that name—which was that of a friend of his childhood—Bois  -Lucas “drew back in terror.”<sup>1</sup>

Armand de Chateaubriand, who for sixteen years had been an *  migr  *, was one of the most stubborn agents of the Royalist cause. He had a ship which he steered himself, and had made nearly twenty descents upon the coast—of which he knew every rock—bringing from Jersey to the insurgents of Brittany reinforcements, money, and instructions. To be taken in France was, by the inflexible law of that time, certain death to him and to all those who had helped him, and it was quite pardonable to hesitate before receiving such a man. For it so happened that a rumour was current that very day throughout the countryside that ten Chouans—one of whom was a Gouyon-Vaucouleurs, slightly related to M. de Bois  -Lucas—had just been condemned to death by the military committee at Rennes.

There is a rapid colloquy, in a low voice, between Bois  -Lucas and the shivering outlaw. “He cannot give him shelter: Armand must put out to sea at once.” “Impossible; the sloop which brought him, and was commanded by a Chouan named Quintal, had left again; for forty-eight

<sup>1</sup> Examination of Bois  -Lucas, sen. *National Archives*, F, 6481. “Chateaubriand, head of the correspondence at Jersey, was put on shore in France, near Fresnaye, 23rd of September last, by Devaux, a well-known Norman Chouan, the same man who presented himself at Lisbon to Gen. La Borde, nearly a year ago. His real name is Alexandre Billard. Quintal accompanied them. They came back to pick up Chateaubriand a week later, but he did not appear.” Bulletin of Dec. 30th, 1808.—*Nat. Archives*, AF<sup>IV</sup>, 1504. “Chateaubriand’s father lived at Guildo, half a league from my house. I became acquainted with the son when I was a young man, though he was ten years younger than me. We often went out hunting together.”—Examination of Bois  -Lucas, sen. *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481.

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hours Armand had been living in a cave in the rocks;<sup>1</sup> he is numb with cold, half dead with hunger. He will stop only one night—besides, he has not landed for any political purpose; he is going to Saint-Malo to see his little daughter, Jenny, who is at school there with Mme. Desmottes; the child is ill, and he has not kissed her for four years." . . . Boisé-Lucas opened the door.

To penetrate into the interior of the house it was necessary to steal on tiptoe across the "parlour," where, by the side of the escutcheoned chimney-piece, the servant-girl, Jacquemine Rouault, was sleeping in one of those cupboard-beds common in Brittany. Boisé-Lucas and his guest reached the first floor, and, when Chateaubriand had supped on bread-and-butter and cider, it was agreed that he should remain hidden all the following day, and that he should leave after dark.

He did not leave, however. After an unsuccessful attempt to find another refuge for him,<sup>2</sup> Boisé-Lucas preferred to hide the refugee rather than let him show himself abroad, lodged him in an upper room of the manor, and brought him food.<sup>3</sup> This was on September 28th; and the same day young Maxime arrived from Plancoët to pass the end of his vacation with his parents, and was at once informed of the situation. Chateaubriand, who had recovered his spirits, owned that his visit to his child was nothing but a pretext; he was charged by the English Government with a mission on the Continent; he must reach Paris and take three letters to correspondents whose names had been given him, and must collect confiden-

<sup>1</sup> "Account of my Journey in France," by Armand de Chateaubriand. —*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481.

<sup>2</sup> "My friend expected a lot of company the next day, and could not receive me. The following night, he took me to another person, whom I have always considered a true friend; at the sight of me, this person 'took two steps backwards,' and declared that he would not receive me for anything in the world. I returned to my former refuge, and managed to avoid being seen by anyone but the master of the house, although eleven visitors came."—*Idem*.

<sup>3</sup> He did more; being afraid to let Chateaubriand leave the manor, he offered to go himself to St. Malo to see the outlaw's daughter. He arrived there in the beginning of October, and first visited Mlle. Emilie de Chateaubriand, Armand's sister. "He asked to see my niece: I sent him to Mme. Desmottes, the school-mistress."—Examination of Mlle. Emilie de Chateaubriand. *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481. Boisé-Lucas, sen., having seen the child, "brought back to her papa a piece of her writing which had gained her a prize."—Same document.

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tial information regarding public opinion and the composition of the garrison.

A lively quarrel followed ; M. de Boisé-Lucas grew angry, declared that his guest had deceived him, and should not be allowed to leave. He was quite as much frightened by the perils Chateaubriand would run if he set foot outside the manor, as he was about himself, if it were discovered that he had concealed an outlaw. At last a middle course was hit on : Maxime offered to make the journey to Paris ; as a student on vacation he ran no risk. His absence would only be for a few days, and during that time Chateaubriand should not leave his hiding-place, of which no one—not even the servant-girl—appeared as yet to have any suspicion. Full instructions were given to Maxime, who concealed the dangerous papers in the lining of his waistcoat, and, on October 1st, embraced his parents, and with a well-filled purse set out bravely on his journey.

The young law-student was far too inexperienced to undertake such a journey. He had spent his life nowhere but in royalist Brittany, imbued with tragic souvenirs of the Chouan war. He was fascinated by the idea of also serving that noble cause which had inspired so much self-sacrifice and devotion ; and in the first place, to imitate more closely those heroes of whom he had so often heard during his evenings at Plancoët, he assumed a surname—"Louveteau"—which, however, he was not, in any case, to use. He took a carriage at Matignon, and arrived that evening at the house of his aunt, Mlle. de Nantillais, to whom he at once confided the object of his journey. The old Chouan lady was delighted, and immediately rewarded him with two louis d'or.<sup>1</sup> He stayed with her a whole day ; rather late on October 3rd he arrived at Rennes on a hired horse. He found the city in a state of consternation ; the execution of Comte de Gouyon-Vaucouleurs and his companions, convicted of holding communication with the *émigrés*, had taken place that afternoon. Maxime sent off the details at once to Boisé-Lucas ; the firing was done to the sound of a military band, "in the

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Boisé-Lucas, jun., to his father. The first is dated from Plancoët, October 2nd.

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presence of all the scum of Rennes." Not one of the condemned men would kneel, nor be blindfolded, nor turn his back. Gouyon, after praying with the priest, had advanced towards the soldiers, had laid his hand on his heart, and said to the officer commanding the firing squad, "Strike there!" He left a daughter without any means of support, and much praise was bestowed upon the considerate gallantry of a rich Breton gentleman, M. de Villeguemon, who, out of pity for a young girl he did not know, and whom the bullets of Bonaparte had made an orphan, had that morning formally demanded her hand in marriage.<sup>1</sup>

Such an example of terrible repression was of a nature to cool even a brave man, but if Maxime de Bois  -Lucas had the matter-of-fact instincts of his father, he had also inherited from his mother a taste for romantic adventures, and he was fully resolved to follow in the footsteps of his forerunners, the Breton heroes, when, on the evening of the 5th, he took the *diligence* for Paris.

He arrived there on the afternoon of the 7th, and having put up at the H  tel de Tours, in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, set out at once to perform his errand. He had to deliver three letters, one to Abb   Sicard, another to Laya, and the third to Caill  —three persons reported to be faithful Royalists upon whom the banished party relied to establish a political correspondence between Paris and London. Abb   Sicard, after some subterfuges, did at last consent to have a secret interview with Chateaubriand's emissary. He grudgingly consented to act as an intermediary for correspondence once or twice, but would do nothing more; even for that he required a solemn oath that he was never to be known under any name but that of "B  casseau." Laya closed his door against the messenger, and replied by a prudent note to the effect that "he was solely occupied by his literary work, and could do no more than express a wish to see the *  migr  s* soon restored to their *Penates*." As for Caill  , he would hear nothing, nor even touch with the tips of his fingers the letter

<sup>1</sup> Letter No. 2 from Bois  -Lucas, jun., to his father. It contains a detailed account of the execution of Gouyon-Vaucouleurs, and is dated from Rennes, October 4th, 1808.—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481.

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that was presented to him, "deeming it too dangerous to have anything to do with people who had taken refuge in London."

Too dangerous? The indifferent success he had met with the very beginning made Maxime reflect. He had entered on the adventure with a light heart, and now he saw that it was a serious matter. Under cover of his father's name, he kept Chateaubriand regularly informed as to what steps he had taken; and the tone of his reports, very enthusiastic at first, grows cooler day by day. He meditates upon his imprudence. "A single letter opened in the post, and I am lost!" he writes. And, besides, the young Chouan, who only knew Brittany, is now discovering France. Paris exerts her charm over him. To his prejudiced mind the city at first appeared an austere "Lacedemonia," where "all is ruin and desolation," but, as his mission obliges him to "study public opinion," we find him frequenting the theatres, public gardens, cafés, and the Palais Royal, and he is soon touched with the epicurean indifference of Parisians. He sees that he is the only person who still thinks about the Bourbons. "The princes," he notes, "are totally forgotten; no one knows where they are. If there were a change of Government no one would think of them." He describes—at first rather grumblingly—the promenades, the theatres, the basements of the Palais Royal, "old cellars of the Duc d'Orléans," which have been profaned "by ornamenting them with mirrors, carpets, and lamps"; but very soon he speaks, without any false shame, about a column of victory which is being set up on the Place Vendôme, of the splendour of the new buildings of the Tuileries, of the Arc de Triomphe, "raised to the glory of the Emperor." He is seduced by the grandeur of the new times; like a practical man he compares a wretched life in the country with the dazzling splendour of Imperial Paris. Ah! how he would like to live there! When he goes back in the *diligence*, after a stay of two weeks, a strange change has been wrought in him; he has tasted the magic fruit, he is frightened of the dull life which awaits him, he revolts at the thought of being tied for ever to a dead past. A fortnight has sufficed to turn this weak-kneed conspirator into a candidate for slavery.



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From Rennes he explains himself clearly in a final letter to Chateaubriand: "I admit that the information I have been able to obtain will be very profitable to England, but there is a limit to my desire to be useful to you; there is delicacy, and mine prevents me from serving a hostile Government. It is awful to betray one's country, and become the enemy of those we ought to protect. If we hate those who rule over us, we ought not to forget that they are French, for the most part, and that it is difficult to reconcile hate for your fellow-citizens with the virtues of an honest man." He ends by acknowledging that he will, in future, have another ambition besides "that of being useful to unfortunate victims," and that he is going to solicit the Government for "the post of auditor to the Council of State."<sup>1</sup>

His letter being written and sent off, he went himself to Bois  -Lucas; but he would not see the refugee, and, his holidays being ended, he returned to Rennes to attend the School of Law.

Chateaubriand was not the man to complain of this desertion. He had what he wanted, for the letters of the young student formed a valuable collection. He added to them a report obtained from a country neighbour of Bois  -Lucas—M. de Gouyon-Vaurouault—on the situation and the forces of the port of Brest, and he made them all into a parcel which he carefully wrapped up in oilcloth.

M. de Bois  -Lucas was anxious to get rid of his dangerous guest. Twice had the refugee slipped, "through snakes' paths," down to the shore, in defiance of the coastguard, but his boat had not appeared. During the day, he lay hidden in the ruins of an old dovecot that had belonged to the monks of Saint-Jacut, which stood on the rocks near the shore of Quatre-Vaulx. When driven out by cold and hunger, he went back to Bois  -Lucas, and was concealed "in the *cabinet* adjoining Madame's room." His hosts told him plainly that they would refuse to give him shelter much longer: the Controller of Customs at Guildo, Martinet, who

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Bois  -Lucas, jun., to his father and Chateaubriand.—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481.

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was not a bad sort of man, however, had been seen prowling round the manor, and had been heard to say, "Chateaubriand is in France, and, perhaps, very near here."

The danger was imminent. M. de Boisé-Lucas, worn out with anxiety, arranged with a sailor of Saint-Cast, named Chauvel, who, for twenty-five louis, agreed to take "the gentleman" to Jersey. Chauvel and Chateaubriand put out to sea on November 9th. Then Boisé-Lucas breathed freely once more; all traces of the outlaw's sojourn were obliterated; neither Jacquemine, the servant girl, nor the farm hand, Rebuffet, seemed to have had any suspicion of the facts. On the night of the 10th, during a furious gale which for twenty hours had twisted the apple trees, shaken the tiles on the old roof, and had brought with it a torrential rain, a knock came at the door. M. de Boisé-Lucas ran and opened it, and there was Chateaubriand, dripping wet. The tempest had driven Chauvel's boat on the coast: but, fortunately, the coastguard was not at his post, and the outlaw could reach the house unseen. It was necessary to receive him, for, as a matter of fact, he was far more dangerous when wandering about than when hidden. A long month passed without any opportunity of escape occurring. On December 15th, news was brought that an English vessel, coasting off Saint-Cast, had been captured by the revenue officers; and the captain, a Chosan named Quintal had been arrested. It was Chateaubriand's -loop.

An order arrived from Saint-Malo to unrig all the sailing boats on the coast every night; there was no hope now of being able to put to sea, and at Boisé-Lucas they lived in mortal fear. Quintal might have given information. The gendarmes might come at any moment; the barking of a dog or the creaking of a gate made host and guest shudder with fear, and Chateaubriand continued to lie hidden in a dark cupboard where he got hardly enough to eat, for Boisé-Lucas feared that the extra consumption of food would be noticed by the servants. An end had to be put, at any cost, to this agony of suspense. M. de Boisé-Lucas again implored Chauvel's help, but he was frightened and refused. Depagne, a farmer in the village, was bolder: he had no boat, and

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knew nothing of navigation, but he could handle a pair of oars, and he undertook the affair for a sum of 400 francs. They were to put out in any boat they could find lying on the beach, and take the oars from the clefts in the rocks, where the fishermen hid them when they returned from sea.

The 6th of January, on a dark night, Bois  -Lucas took his guest down to Ville-norme, on the Bay of Fresnaye. He left him there, and returned home much relieved; and, in fact, two days, three days—a whole week passed and nothing was heard. The refugee must by this time have reached the Channel Islands.

On January 21st, when all danger seemed to be past, M. Besnard de la Vieux-Ville, Mayor of Saint-Cast, looking very sorrowful, appeared at Bois  -Lucas. He was accompanied by an unknown personage whom he introduced as the Commissaire of General Police at Morlaix. Eight gendarmes of the Planco  t brigade were in the courtyard. M. de Bois  -Lucas felt that he was lost, and he realised it more fully at the first questions that were put to him. The pitiless sea, after two tempestuous nights, had thrown Chateaubriand and his companion on the Normandy coast, at twenty leagues from Saint-Cast. Whilst the two shipwrecked men were being restored to life, a perfidious wave threw on shore the portmanteau which Chateaubriand had thrown overboard far out to sea. The correspondence it contained was uninjured, and was a complete and ready-made act of accusation.<sup>1</sup>

M. de Bois  -Lucas was handcuffed and taken to Morlaix; the sailor, Chauvel, was also arrested, and they found at Blandin's inn, in the Rue des Juifs at Saint-Malo, M. de Gouyon-Vaurouault, the author of the report on Brest. On January 27th they seized upon Maxime de Bois  -Lucas, who

<sup>1</sup> The papers thrown up by the sea, and which cost several men their lives, are still in the National Archives, kept together by a pin half eaten away by verdigris. They contain nothing but Chateaubriand's report on his journey to France, and some trifling details of no importance—lists of commissions to execute, and purchases to be made in Paris; books, stuffs, articles of ladies' dress. On one of these stained sheets is a metrical version, written by Armand's hand, of the time-worn story of the sailor who knew he had been shipwrecked in a civilised country because he came across a gibbet.

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had come from Rennes to Morlaix on hearing of his father's imprisonment. At Paris those three joined Quintal, Depagne, and Chateaubriand, who were locked up in the Abbaye prison. Maxime's letters showed so clearly the guilt of each of the prisoners that the trial soon ended. On March 30th a military committee, sitting at the *hôtel* in the Rue du Cherche-Midi and presided over by Gen. de Bazancourt, condemned to death Chateaubriand, Quintal, Vaurouault, and Boisé-Lucas, jun. The latter's father was sent to be tried at the Criminal Court of the Côtes-du-Nord; Chauvel and Depagne were imprisoned in the fortress of Ham.

Sentence was delivered on Thursday morning, and was to be carried into effect before dawn of the following day, which was *Good Friday*. The four condemned men passed their last night together. Chateaubriand begged his companions to pardon him. "We pardon you if you promise to die like a brave man," replied Vaurouault, who saw that he was nervous and agitated. They did not sleep. At two in the morning preparations began around the prison. It was snowing. At three o'clock the officials entered the condemned cell; the first name they called was that of Maxime de Boisé-Lucas. He was led in silence through the corridors to another part of the prison, and there they left him. He heard the tumbril and the escort which conducted the three others to the Plain of Grenelle leave by the Rue Sainte-Marguerite. He learned about nine o'clock that they were dead,<sup>1</sup> but that he had been reprieved.

The day passed without his being examined; the following day also, and the following weeks and months. He seemed to be forgotten. Not until August 16th did he learn that by a decree dated the previous day his punishment had been commuted to two years' imprisonment.

To what did he owe his life? To his youth? To some

<sup>1</sup> In M. Lacaille's fine collection of autographs is preserved the short note, written with a hand trembling with emotion, in which René de Chateaubriand informs Mlle. de Custine of the death of his cousin Armand. The note consists of three lines only: "I have just come from the Plain of Grenelle; all is over; I shall see you directly." The page of "*Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*," in which the drama of Good Friday, 1809, is described, is too well known to need quoting here.

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powerful intervention? Neither: but Fouché, one day that he was in a good humour, had placed before the Emperor the letter in which the young countryman, dazzled by the apparent splendour of Imperial France, had confessed his regret at having served Chateaubriand and his admiration of the new *régime*. This whiff of incense—so unexpected in a correspondence between Chouans—had disarmed the god and made him show mercy.<sup>1</sup>

Maxime remained at the Abbaye until winter; on December 26th he was transferred to the donjon of Vincennes, where he was altogether forgotten. He was “without news of his relatives, without money, without clothes, without linen.” In vain did he demand the 828 francs which had been found upon him at the time of his arrest; his supplications received no reply. Someone, however, was interested in his fate, for at the end of two years, at the date fixed, March 30th, 1811, Fouché remembered him, and he was set at liberty. Maxime did not want to leave Paris without his 828 francs. He stayed at an hôtel in the Rue de Richelieu, and began to take steps to recover his money. The reply to his demand was a passport for Brittany, and he was compelled to leave. He went back to Boisé-Lucas where his father, after a couple of years spent in various prisons, had also just returned under police surveillance.

It would be valuable to know something of the after-life of these people, over whose heads such a storm had passed. But all inquiries are useless; they do not appear to have had any other desire than simply to live. At the Restoration, when all those who had in the days of the tyrant suffered for the good cause put forward claims for compensation, Maxime de Boisé-Lucas might, like many others, have produced his credentials, for he had

<sup>1</sup> “To the Emperor. Your Majesty, on August 15th, 1809, commuted the punishment of Boisé-Lucas to 2 years’ imprisonment, which expired the 30th of March last. This young man has conducted himself very prudently during his imprisonment. I ought to add that, in the letter which he wrote to Chateaubriand to give an account of his mission, he stated that the work was repugnant to him, and he repented that he had served the enemies of his country.”—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6481.

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endured Bonaparte's prisons and looked death in the face. He asked for nothing, however; probably foreseeing that the same letter which had moved the Emperor to pity would be but a sorry recommendation to the King. He therefore kept quiet, contenting himself with now and again putting in a claim for his 828 francs—which he never got.

His one death-grapple with the world quite sufficed; he wanted no more. He had given up all adventures, and would not even try that of marriage; he lived with his father and mother, without ambition, without joy, without any ties to life. M. and Mme. de Boisé-Lucas died in 1837: he remained in the dull old manor-house alone with the ghost of the man who had brought upon him there so many misfortunes. He hunted, strolled round his orchard, sold his cider, and talked with his farm-servants—but never of the past.

He died June 14th, 1841. Boisé-Lucas now is uninhabited; nothing has been changed. There may still be seen the window at the panes of which Chateaubriand tapped: the parlour with the black stone chimney, under the escutcheoned mantel of which so many anxious hours were spent, whispering about the man who lay hidden upstairs—in the *cabinet* adjoining Madame's room—a black hole without a window closed by a glazed door. Everything is as it was then, down to the old furniture—rustic, but not devoid of character—a spinning-wheel, a clock-case, an oak table. It is at once both rural and tragic; a pleasant odour of apples mingles with melancholy memories. At the bottom of the garden is the ravine, still covered with bushes, and beyond it the gorse under the pines, and the ruins of the dovecot, where the refugee passed his nights watching the sea—that ever pitiless, caressing, feline sea which in this drama so cruelly played the part of traitress.

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## III

### THE CHEVALIER DE BRUSLART

"BRUSLART has landed on the coast of Normandy;—Bruslart must be in Paris."

When, during the first months of the Consulate, a note of this kind, emanating from some spy or other, came to the offices of the General Police, a shudder of undissimulated terror ran through every official from the highest to the lowest. From the Minister himself down to the humble "observer" all trembled, all set to work to search; thirty specially appointed detectives received orders "to find Bruslart," the six thousand policemen of Paris were in agony, hourly expecting a catastrophe. Until a more reassuring report arrived, they were as comfortable as a man seated on a barrel of powder; "Bruslart left to-night and has gone towards the coast;—Bruslart was met with, on horseback, on the road to Caen." The "Sûreté" felt relieved until a fresh alarm was given; "Bruslart is in Paris; he has received 300,000 francs; an insurrection is about to break out."<sup>1</sup> This information was like an order to clear the decks for action. Réal grew crotchety, Desmarets lost his head, even the phlegmatic Fouché himself looked anxious, and no one in the Minister's office felt like himself again until the feverishly expected announcement came that "Bruslart has gone towards the west, and embarked at Quinéville. . . . Bruslart is in England. . . . Bruslart has given no sign of life, and is believed to be sick, or dead." Whereupon everybody in the offices of the Quai Malaquais congratulated themselves—though they thought the news too good to be true.

This Bruslart was a redoubtable Chouan, who had been the confidant and lieutenant of Frotté, the famous leader of the insurrection in Normandy. Bruslart, it was said, had sworn to take vengeance on Bonaparte for the death of his friend, who had been captured and shot, after a mock trial. He was,

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives, F<sup>t</sup>, 6231.*

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in 1801, a man of about fifty years of age, rather short, with black, curly hair; and a long, whitish nose emerging from a thick beard which covered his face up to his eyes. His manners were brusque, his gaiety heroic, he was alert, and brave even to rashness. For ten years he had led the adventurous life of a royalist knight-errant, accustomed to all sorts of disguises, used to all sorts of impersonations, fond of every kind of danger.

At the general amnesty, in March 1800, Bruslart had, however, surrendered, and his name was inscribed on the list of persons pardoned, with the proviso that he was obliged to live in Paris. He took a lodging in the Rue de la Madeleine, at the Hôtel des Neuf-Départements, went out very little, and saw no one "except Mme. d'Anjou, a stubborn royalist," whom the police knew to be a correspondent of the exiled princes. His intimate connection with this lady disturbed the police. They were still more frightened when, three months later, Bruslart disappeared without having obtained permission or procured a passport. Those who had benefited by the amnesty were tolerated, but they must not play any tricks, and from that day forth the old Chouan was regarded as a dangerous outlaw.

The fact is that he was bored to death in the small room of the hôtel; the low ceiling and close walls stifled him; he longed for nights passed amongst the reeds, clandestine embarkations on stormy seas, pursuits, hiding-places, ambuscades and dangers, and preferred the life of a hunted wild beast to that of a peaceable citizen under the surveillance of the police. Moreover, he excelled in the art of throwing his pursuers off the track. He started for Scotland—taking care to let everybody know it—and was soon forgotten, for there were so many others to be looked after. Then he comes back to Paris, where he had discreet and charming lady-friends, and he goes from one to the other, sometimes venturing into the gaming houses, and braving Fouché's sleuth-hounds with insolent good luck. The *grande battue* which followed the explosion of the infernal machine was very nearly fatal to him; he had a rough time of it, and found even the most hospitable doors closed against him. Pasquier relates that,



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several days after that attempt, a certain person to whom he could refuse nothing begged him to give shelter for a few hours to a hunted royalist. Pasquier consented, but not enthusiastically, and the man arrived that night. It was Bruslart; he had changed his hiding-place eight times in a week; he carried a whole arsenal of pistols and daggers, and was prepared for a desperate hand-to-hand struggle. Pasquier required from his terrible guest an assurance that he had not been mixed up in Limoëlan's attempt, and Bruslart even wrote a letter to Bonaparte in which he formally stated, as a proof of his sincerity, that his own plan had been to attack the First Consul, in the midst of his escort, on the road to Malmaison, and kill him "in fair combat if he could not be carried off."<sup>1</sup>

After a couple of nights, Pasquier managed to get rid of his compromising comrade—not before it was time, for the police spies had already begun to prowl round the house, the *billet doux* which Bruslart had written from there to Bonaparte not being of a nature to ingratiate the author with the police. Thenceforth there was a ceaseless duel between the obdurate Chouan and the police; a price was set on his head—two thousand francs; all the chief *commissaires* of police received his description, all the Custom-house officers had orders to arrest him, all the gendarmes were enjoined to carry him, with his hands bound, from brigade to brigade till he reached the office of the Minister. But the orders were given in vain—Bruslart could not be captured. Frequently his presence is noted at some place just at the very moment when he is preparing to leave it. The notes accumulate. "He was seen leaving Paris—He passed a day at the Post Inn at Caen—He recently lodged with Le Provost, an innkeeper at Bayeux."<sup>2</sup> When the trackers are worn out and the search relaxes, there are methods of recalling attention to a man who does not want to be forgotten. One night, Murat gives a masked ball to

<sup>1</sup> Pasquier's *Memoirs*. "Bruslart rejected with horror the proposals made to assassinate the First Consul. He was not an assassin, he said, but if he were given a number of determined men, he would attack the Consul and his escort, on the Malmaison road."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6231.

<sup>2</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup> 6231.

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inaugurate the Hôtel Thélusson, where he resides, now that he is the brother-in-law of the First Consul. A man pushes aside the servants, threads his way through the groups of guests, in three bounds reaches the master of the house, insults him, threatens to "cut off his ears"—and disappears.<sup>1</sup> It is Bruslart, or said to be, for a police report of the same date mentions his presence at the Îles Saint Marcouf. For six weeks, no one at the Quai Malaquais ventures to sleep.

The mere name of this resolute ruffian makes the chief officials of the police turn pale; they are tacitly convinced that Napoleon will fall by his hand, and Bruslart, well aware of their terror, exults at the effect he has produced. He is not displeased to think that he frightens the master of the world; the character of an invisible bugbear suits him admirably; the idea that the dread of an inexorable dagger spoils the usurper's triumph; poisons all the pleasures of his nights, his walks, his *fêtes*, his rest; the satisfaction of being the ever-present nightmare of those who love Bonaparte and those who protect him, amply suffice to gratify Bruslart's ill-will. He could not devise any slower or more refined torture. The certainty that his very existence troubles every *fête* at the Tuileries he considers as the best possible revenge for his companions. A spectre is more terrifying than a reality, and what would be the good, therefore, of ceasing to be a phantom and risking some blow which might perhaps be parried, and the failure of which would be a fresh success for his enemies?

Besides, assassination is distasteful to him, and he has no inclination for tyrannicide. For Bruslart, in spite of his awe-exciting reputation, is a sentimental swain, and, despite his fifty years, has a susceptible heart that thirsts for affection. He is acquainted with trusty lady-friends who await him with open arms. Near Bayeux, there is Mme. de Vaubadon,<sup>2</sup> a seductive blonde with a very white complexion, a graceful

<sup>1</sup> Billard de Veaux, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> "The 18th of Frimaire, Year IX. Bruslart is in Normandy. Watch Mme. Vaubadon, and Mlle. Banville, with whom he is very intimate. He has also connections at Cressenville; he has his letters addressed there to Citizen Grimot, with three dots put below the seal . . . He also knows Sarciron Labesse, who was condemned to death by default."—*National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6231.

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carriage and languorous eyes; near Caen, Rose Banville, known to all the royalist party under the name of "Joan of Arc"; at Valognes, Mlle. Dotteville, a poetical and sentimental lady who published verses under the pseudonym of "the Recluse of the Valley of the Drôme"; and at Bayeux, Mme. de Thalleivaude. These were his "summer girls," for at Paris there were other hostesses, not less loving or less devoted. There was a widow, Mme. la Vaquerie; there was Mlle. Aimée Berruyer, to whom he was reported to be secretly married; and there was Mme. d'Anjou, the female spy of the Princes.<sup>1</sup> These brave royalists all knew each other, corresponded, and served the good cause as best they could by sheltering the paladins of the Chouannerie,<sup>2</sup> who were sure to find in their houses not only well concealed hiding-places, but warm-hearted, discreet companions who were not jealous and not exclusive—for the Revolution had done away with many prejudices, and many scruples as well. Besides, what ought not to be done for brave heroes, who daily risked their lives, who arrived after nightfall, stuck all over with dirks and pistols, and who might on the morrow be shot down by a gendarme or a revenue officer? So there were tears at their departure, joy at their return, and the agony of suspense during their absence—piquant delights for amiable ladies with romantic feelings and sensitive hearts. Of all the many women who gave shelter to proscribed royalists there was only one base enough to give up to the police the man who had taken refuge with her.

Bruslart, who was distrustful by necessity, had no fear of a fate of that kind. The life of an outlaw was not insupportable to him and in fact suited his character. Whilst the guard round the Tuileries was being doubled, whilst the mamelukes were beating every hole and corner of the Malmaison road, whilst police-inspectors were stationed at every gate of Paris, and the lodging-houses were being searched in the hopes of "discovering Bruslart," he was living peaceably at Vaubadon or Bayeux, regardless of the

<sup>1</sup> *National Archives*, F<sup>7</sup>, 6231.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal des hommes libres*, 6th of Brumaire, Year VIII.

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fact that there was a price set on his head, and leading an existence which, if a trifle monotonous, was not without its charms. With a little precaution, but without danger, neighbourly visits could be paid, for in that district all the squirelings were faithful royalists. They dined well, and Bruslart ate like a man who might be in prison ere night and was not sure of his supper. After dinner, he was quite willing to oblige with a song—one of the war-chants of the Chouans or the “Song of the Six Departments.” All the Chouans sang; in all the *dossiers*, now in the Archives—dirty old papers worn at the folds, found on royalists who were arrested—there is scarcely a bundle that does not contain some gallant or sentimental ballad. Many of the poor wretches had no shoes to their feet, but everyone had in his knapsack love-songs or ballads of a broader sort. It was these latter that Bruslart preferred, and he sang them with gusto, and many a sly look and mischievous twinkle.

At Paris, meanwhile, some of the police-officers, ambitious for official praise or reward, were boasting that they were meeting Bruslart at every street-corner. “He is about to strike a decisive blow—He is preparing to take up arms. An attempt is imminent.” In default of Bruslart himself, the spies could at all events evoke his servant—named Charles, according to some, or Bernard, according to others—a kind of mythical personage, a misshapen scoundrel ornamented with an enormous scar from a sabre-cut which had nearly split his skull. Wherever this sinister-looking bully was seen it was suspected that his master was not far off, and in this way Bruslart continued to be to the imperial police an ever-invisible yet ever-present bogey.

When, towards the close of 1802, the First Consul planned a journey into Normandy, the anxiety redoubled. Bruslart had declared, it appears, “that he should consider himself dishonoured if Bonaparte came into his district, whilst he was there, and returned scatheless.” He was represented as being “so decided, and so pledged to England,” that a catastrophe was fully expected this time. The authorities were on the point of countermanding the journey. Bonaparte, however, did not wish to show himself beaten, but the conditions under which

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the journey were made gave a deplorable insight into the conditions under which these officially triumphal excursions were made, and plainly showed there was a seamy side to them. An old Chouan leader, who had sold himself to the police, and "who knew Bruslart extremely well, having served under him," was chosen, dressed in a livery, and perched on the dickey of the consular carriage with orders to scan the crowds. "If he should perceive Bruslart or any of his band, he was at once to inform the officer who was nearest to him at the time, and hand him the order for arrest he carried."

It was in this way that Bonaparte made his solemn entry into all the towns—less anxious, perhaps, about the assassin from whom he was being protected than about the Chouan who was behind his back. The police had, indeed, guaranteed the "fidelity" of this renegade, but they might have been deceived. The man might be one of Bruslart's agents, or even if he were faithful to his trust, could he, amongst all the crowd which pressed round the carriage, recognise his former leader in time to prevent an attack? Might he not, at the moment when he ought to point out the assassin to the guard, feel some scruple or a sudden revulsion of sentiments? And so the procession went forward, Bonaparte expecting the worst, and congratulating himself at every turn of the wheel that no tragedy had taken place, and astonished when night came to find himself still living, and in a room hermetically closed, protected by a score of sentinels, and where the valets, at night, barricaded and double locked the doors, explored the cupboards, felt behind the curtains, and peeped under the bed.

Whilst his all-powerful foe was a prey to these increasing fears, Bruslart, the outlaw who was being searched for in every nook and corner, was living far from the police, in some comfortable *château*, surrounded by a select circle of lady friends. He had bought a lathe and amused himself by turning napkin-rings. Tradition asserts that he had also a taste for cooking, and excelled in pancakes and fritters flavoured with acacia flower. At dessert he drank to the health of the King and the downfall of the tyrant,

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and trolled forth the "Song of the Six Departments" to his companions, who perhaps felt a bit nervous.

With consummate skill he managed to use the threat and the *alibi* at the same time. So many of the police were occupied in guarding the First Consul that there were none left to search out Bruslart's hiding-place. Like a skilful tactician, he made his adversary send his best battalions to look for him in a place where he was not to be found. He lived in such security that during all the years the Empire lasted he never dreamed of flying to England, but resided near Bayeux or Caen, sometimes even getting as far as Valognes, where he often made a long stay. He did not trouble to hide himself, nor to travel by night; he donned the uniform of an officer of infantry when he made one of these journeys, and jogged along mounted on a good horse, saluted by all the gendarmes, and stopping at the best inn. From time to time he found means to transmit secretly to the Minister of Police a note which made that official and all his satellites shiver with fear. "Bruslart has landed . . . the boatman who brought him from Jersey is named Lenoir, alias Laroche . . . he travels under the name of Petit, and calls himself a Belgian merchant. Bruslart has been seen in a gaming-house in the Palais Royal." The anxiety caused by communications such as this increased his security, whilst it satisfied his revenge. Napoleon was perhaps more afraid of this invisible foe than he would have been by ten armies ranged in battle against him.

The Empire collapsed; Bonaparte went to Elba. Of all the alternatives whom his astounding good fortune had raised against him, one alone had never been vanquished—Bruslart. The fallen Emperor bore a grudge against destiny; he acknowledged that one of his regrets, in abandoning the government of the world, was that he had never been able to get the better of that "wretch." His wrath may be

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imagined when he learned that this "wretch" had been named Governor of Corsica, and specially charged to keep a watchful eye on Elba. The Restoration thus rewarded Bruslart, and the captive lion had for a gaoler the gad-fly which had harassed him with impunity for so many years.

The Chevalier de Bruslart, Governor-General, landed at Ajaccio on November 13th, 1814. He had a fleet at his orders: two frigates, the *Fleur-de-lys* and the *Melpomène*, the corvette, *Egérie*, the brig, *Zéphir*, a tender, and two despatch boats. From Ajaccio to Bastia—which the general had chosen as the seat of government, in order to be nearer the island of Elba—there was a triumphal march across Corsica; the people thronged round their new master, kissed his hands, and cheered him. Bruslart was received at Bastia with salutes from cannon and peals from bells.<sup>1</sup> He accepted this homage with becoming gravity, and from that day began to govern Corsica as befitted a man invested with full powers.<sup>2</sup> His incompetence was pitiful; that of the men he had chosen to aid him still worse. Suspecting that his ignorance of the laws and the administrative regulations might lead him into difficulties, he had provided himself with a secretary, a briefless barrister, named Billart, "of a detestable reputation, and even charged with having assassinated his father-in-law, but set at liberty for want of sufficient proof." Bruslart, on his way to Corsica, had met this man, by chance, at an inn at Aix, had been fascinated by his chatter, and had at once appointed him head of his cabinet. Such was his "civil household." His military staff, which was very numerous, was composed of brave and worthy royalists, all old Chouans, good enough for guerilla warfare against the Blues, but now dazzled by the smartness of their uniform, and astonished at their own importance. Staff-Major Galloni did not know how to write: Lieut.-Col. Perrin—a *bon vivant* who had married an Englishwoman during the emigration—openly declared that "he took no

<sup>1</sup> Colonel de Gonneville, *Military Souvenirs*.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the War Office*. Documents relating to Corsica, 1814—1815.





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meditates an escape. "It is reported to me that he is bent upon escaping, and that his departure is fixed for January 15th." Another time he writes, "B—— is about to attempt something; it is rumoured that he will make himself King of Italy." He wearies the "captive" by an unceasing surveillance; day and night the Corsican fleet cruises in sight of Porto-Ferrajo. Bruslart maintains an incessant and obstinate warfare against the fallen usurper. The two men glare at each other across the blue waters. From the terrace of his modest palace, Napoleon, with rage in his heart, gazes at Corsica—*his* Corsica—now under the rule of the "pirate" who for fifteen years has been to him a hideous nightmare never absent from his thoughts. The other, from the windows of his hotel at Bastia, sees the bare rock on which his humbled rival, now fallen into his power, was vegetating. The parts are reversed now; it is Bruslart who is the tyrant, Bonaparte who is oppressed. The irony of destiny which had permitted this improbable turn of affairs shortly brought about another which was even more unexpected—Bruslart let his prisoner escape!

During the night of February 26th—profiting by the absence of the English representative Campbell, who was at Leghorn, whither he often went to pay court to a lady with whom he was in love—Bonaparte ordered his ships to be got ready. But, before quitting the island, he signed this decree—the only one he issued: "Article 1. General Brulard (*sic*) is cashiered; he is to be immediately arrested and sent to Paris under good escort. Art. 2. Seals are to be put on all his papers by the Government junto." The first exercise of the sovereign power he was trying to regain was to rid himself for ever of his insignificant and odious enemy. He was in haste to get rid of him before he began to reign.<sup>1</sup>

Bruslart knew nothing about all this till March 2nd. The

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon, before quitting Elba, had drawn up a special proclamation to the garrisons of Corsica, in which this passage occurs: "The unworthy General who was appointed to command had no other mission than to lay ambushes for me. He is one of the satellites of Georges and the Chouans; he could never bear the sight of our eagles, and he pretended to command them."

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report that he sent off to the Minister that day is a very curious document.<sup>1</sup> He sends off all his fleet in pursuit of the fugitive; he believes that Bonaparte has sailed towards Ajaccio, that the tyrant has a grudge against him, and there is likely to be a battle between them. The letter is clearly expressed, written rapidly, but not in frantic haste. It is his last letter. How did he escape? In what way did his strange staff disappear? Upon what ship did Bruslart and his lieutenants succeed in leaving Corsica? Where did they land? We do not know; all these petty details are swallowed up in the huge tumult of the Hundred Days. According to the account which Bruslart afterwards gave, he had considerable trouble in throwing off the scent the assassins whom Napoleon had sent after him. For three months he led a most miserable existence, pursued by cut-throats, escaping as if by a miracle from all the traps laid for him, and outwitting all the police of France. We are rather led to believe this, because, on April 11th, at the Tuileries, Napoleon reiterates his orders "to arrest Bruslart, and bring him under a safe escort to Paris." But he did not have the pleasure of seeing his orders put into force; Bruslart was destined to escape him always.

As soon as the "Ogre" was definitely chained up, and he could show himself, the old Chouan returned to Paris, and put forward a claim for past services. The King named

1 "Bastia, March 2nd, 1815.

"Monseigneur,

"I had the honour to inform Your Eminence in a letter of March 1st that I was informed that preparations for departure were being made on the island of Elba. Your Eminence knows, perhaps, that this departure took place on February 27th, at one in the morning.

"On March 1st the frigate *Melpomène* arrived at Bastia in the morning, having been cruising off the island of Elba in conformity with the instructions I had given. On the morning of the 2nd I learned that Napoleon had left Porto Ferrajo, that he had sailed towards the west—it was believed for Corsica, and that Ajaccio was intended. This information was sent me from Leghorn.

"I at once ordered the frigate, *Melpomène*, to double the Cape of Corsica and coast along the western side of the island to make sure that Napoleon had not attempted a landing, and, in case its Commander should meet him, to attack him and take him dead or alive. At the same time, I sent the *Delphine* to Elba to obtain information. The commander of this vessel returned to Bastia at four in the morning of the 4th, after having communicated during the 3rd with many of the inhabitants of Elba, etc."

—*Archives of the War Office.* Documents relating to Corsica, 1814—1815.

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him in December 1816 *maréchal de camp*—his appointment dating from January 1st, 1801—but he was put on half-pay. Louis XVIII. hardly dared to put forward a man who had been mixed up in so many schemes of doubtful morality, and upon whom even his old comrades would have looked askance. Nevertheless, in 1822, he had the platonic satisfaction of being named Inspector-General of Infantry—which he never inspected.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have returned of his own accord—principally because a regular, orderly life did not suit an old guerilla-chief. He resided in Paris, but he often changed his lodgings. We find him, in 1816, in the Rue Traversière-Saint-Honoré; in 1820, at the Hôtel de Mayenne, in the Rue de Courty; in 1822, in the Rue Saint-Dominique; and in 1825, in the Rue de Louvois.<sup>2</sup> Every half year he asked the Minister for leave of absence, and started off on some journey. He passed some months in England; he revisited Normandy, the scene of his former exploits. On his return from one such excursion—the object of which is not stated—he installed himself at No. 74 Rue Saint-Dominique, in an apartment he had previously occupied. There he died, on December 10th, 1829.<sup>3</sup> The more royalist gazettes mentioned his death, a few day later, but not one of them ventured to publish a funeral oration.

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the War Office. Dossier Bruslart.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>3</sup> This is the date given by La Sicotière. The *Moniteur*, in announcing Bruslart's death, in its number of December 31st, 1829, does not give the date of his decease.

## THE TWO WIVES OF BILLAUD-VARENNE

When, in 1785, Maître Billaud, advocate in the Parliamentary Courts, went to reside in the old house with the sloping roof, in the Rue de Savoie (now No. 4), he declared himself quite content with his lot in life; being one of those men intended by nature "to be happy at very little cost." He received, every month, from his father—who was also an advocate, and much esteemed at La Rochelle—a sufficient allowance, and he had no expensive tastes, very little ambition, and no desire to get on in the world. He cared for nothing but books and solitude.

In the same house there lodged a young German girl—Angelica Doye—and her mother. They had recently come from Osnabruck. They were poor—almost without resources, for their principal income was a sum of one hundred and fifty livres, which the diocesan officials paid Angelica, according to custom, as a "new convert," for she had abjured the Protestant religion, in which she had been brought up, soon after she came to Paris.

Maître Billaud, who hardly ever went out, and received no company, fell madly in love with Angelica, whom he frequently met on the staircase. She was a tall, big girl, fairly well educated, rather indolent, radiantly healthy, and wonderfully pretty.<sup>1</sup>

Billaud, senior, when asked for his consent to the marriage, refused it, and even Mme. Doye expected that her daughter

<sup>1</sup> Georges Duval writes, in his *Souvenirs Thermidorien*, that Angelica Doye "was one of the most beautiful women he had ever seen."—A. Bégin.



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would get a better husband than a brideless barrister who did not seem over-sharp. But the young man could talk well, when the occasion required it, and he managed to convince both parties who opposed his marriage, that if he had little worldly wealth he had honour and honesty, and that "Mlle. Angelica would never repent her choice," but would always be "his life-companion and the adored wife his heart had chosen." The wedding took place on September 14th, 1784, at Saint-André-des-Arcs, and the young couple found a lodging not far from the Rue de Savoie, on the fourth floor of a house in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs, opposite the Rue des Grands Augustins.

He was not rich, and but rarely had a case. Billaud tried writing plays—a farce by him had once been produced—and hissed—at the Rochelle Theatre. He worked at the "book" of an opera, called *Alsire*, which never left his desk, and, vexed at his want of success, tried another line. Political pamphlets and works on social reform were then much in vogue, and he successively published three books which did not make any great impression on the public, and brought their author plenty of worry "without a single crown of rights."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, he was introduced about this time to one of his *confrères*, an advocate to the King's Council, and celebrated throughout all the quarter for his bluntness and plain-speaking—Danton—who employed Billaud as his secretary, without, however, taking any particular liking to him. Indeed, there could be but little sympathy between the cold, acrimonious secretary and his impetuous, free-spoken master. In 1789 Billaud was a thin, reserved, silent man, thirty-three years of age, with a pale complexion, hard-looking eyes with a slight squint in them, black hair plastered down on the temples, a straight nose, and a sarcastic mouth.

Danton elbowed his way freely through the world, and all those who followed in his footsteps "became something." Billaud, who was a citizen of the turbulent section of the Théâtre Français, was, on the eve before the 10th of August,

<sup>1</sup> A. Bégis. Unpublished Memoirs. Biography.

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named a member of the "insurrectional municipality"; a few days later he was deputy *procureur* of the Commune, and, three weeks afterwards, was elected member of the Convention, and had launched out into the whirlpool.

Everybody else, in those days, lived in a constant high fever—but he did not. This period of his life is related in all his biographies, and in no instance have historians been indulgent to him. Amidst all the wild fury and heroic suffering of those terrible days, he alone remained calm and performed his work methodically—and a horrible work it was. He was present, officially, at the massacres at the Abbaye, complimented the murderers, and promised them pay; after which he went home as unconcerned as though he were returning from an afternoon stroll. Then we find him presiding over the Jacobin club, presiding over the Convention, and member of the Committee of Public Safety. He dragged to the scaffold the Girondins, the Queen, and his former master, Danton—who said of him, "Billaud has a dagger under his tongue." He approved of the shooting, drowning, and other wholesale massacres at Lyons, Nantes, and Arras. He organised the pitiless committee at Orange; he encouraged Fouquier-Tinville; his name is found, and often the first, upon every death-warrant. He signed before his colleagues, for he was pitiless, emotionless, unenthusiastic. When others were frightened, hesitated, drew back, he kept his course; speaking in bombastic sentences, and "shaking his lion's mane," for—in order to make his cold, passionless face more in harmony with the excited visages round him—he wore a yellow wig which would appear ludicrous anywhere but on the sinister-looking head of Billaud-Varenne. When Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon were, in their turn, threatened with death, he deserted them, passed over to the enemy, and drove them to execution. . . . Why? For what end? We cannot say, for he was not ambitious, and cared neither for money nor power. In later days, when he wrote down his recollections, he had but one memory of his pro-consulate. "I walked on a volcano, the subterranean shocks of which warned me of some fresh eruption, whilst daggers glittered all round me, and the thunder growled over my head."



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His life, during this great world-storm, was that of a quiet clerk, punctual at the office, and assiduous at his work.<sup>1</sup> He picked up, almost haphazard, a few books at the bookstalls, to occupy his spare time of an evening, or else he worked at his tragedy, *Polycrate*, for he had not given up all thoughts of the theatre. He had not changed his lodgings, but still lived on the fourth floor in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs. He received no company, and led the most placid, humdrum existence. His wife was contented, and that was enough. "Not a cloud obscured the bright heaven of our union." Perhaps she never asked him where he had been, or what he had done; or, if she were informed, she was not greatly moved. She loved him; she deemed him the purest, tenderest, most honest of men, who "most deserves happiness"—which she tried to give him, and succeeded, for he was, by his own avowal, "perfectly happy."<sup>2</sup>

The Parisians are often too impetuous in their infatuations, and too unjust in their aversions, but their presentiments were right in this instance, and they had taken an intense dislike to this blood-thirsty wretch, who had survived every party to which he had belonged, and yet found means to avoid paying his debt to the scaffold. This living spectre of the September massacres still went scatheless, but now that people were no longer frightened of him, he was hooted and cursed in the streets. Robespierre had his fanatics, and Marat his adorers, but there was not a person to take Billaud-Varenne's part—not a friend, not a supporter, not even a comrade.

He bore up against the storm, however.<sup>3</sup> With the same impassive face and obstinate air, he still sat at the Convention, at the top of "the Mountain," on the bench which Robespierre used to occupy, but in the street he hid himself. One

<sup>1</sup> "Those who are acquainted with me know that I have always led the most retired and simple life. Anyone who saw me ten years ago will not find that I have changed in any way. Being fond of study, I have not made many friends; at the most I have but five or six, and they certainly do not come to see me more than once in ten years. For my own part, I never go into society."—Billaud-Varenne to his fellow-citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Letters, quoted by A. Bégis.

<sup>3</sup> He posted up in Paris an apology for his principles and conduct. "J. N. Billaud, representative of the people, to his fellow-citizens." See Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction Thermidorienne*, vol. i., p. 313.

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November day, in 1794, as he was passing through the Palais-Egalité, he was recognised, followed, insulted, jostled, and had to slip away through a shop having a door in another street. Duhem brought news of this riot to the Committee of Public Safety. Someone replied, "It is very difficult to prevent Billaud from being hooted." A little later, some young men dressed up a dummy to look something like Billaud, shook it, knocked it about, and dragged it to the door of the Convention; then made it kneel in the mud in token of humble apology; finally carted it off to the Jacobin Club, and burnt it, amidst cries of "Down with Billaud! Down with the drinkers of blood!"

Retribution soon overtook him. On March 2nd, 1795, the Convention decreed his arrest, and, a month later, ordered that he was to be "transported at once." He had passed this month in his own house, guarded by two gendarmes, who watched, day and night, on the staircase. According to a tradition, which is not improbable, he occupied himself, during this month, in excavating a hole in the wall of his lodging in which he hid all his papers. They have never been found,<sup>1</sup> though the house was pulled down a few years ago to make room for the Lycée-Fénelon.

There was great joy in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs on April 2nd. A carriage of the Committee of General Safety drew up before Billaud's door, and some gendarmes, the Commissary of Police, two agents of the Committee, and the *juge de paix* entered the house, whilst a crowd assembled round the portal demanding the "Jacobin." At the end of an hour, he appeared, surrounded by policemen, still haughty, his low forehead and shock of yellow hair looking horrible. The crowd cried, "Kill him! To the guillotine with the monster." He got into the carriage, for which the gendarmes

<sup>1</sup> In 1821 a book was published, in two volumes, entitled *Mémoires de Billaud-Varenne, ex-conventionnel, écrits au Port-au-Prince en 1818*, by M. . . . The work does not appear to be wholly fictitious. It may have been compiled from his notes, for Billaud wrote a great deal. We cite this passage. "Some day, there will be found some singular memoirs, written by my hand, concerning this memorable period of the Revolution. The day before I was seized to be transported, I placed them in the wall of the house which I occupied in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs—now it is said, No. 54."

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with difficulty forced a way. The people imagined that he was going to be taken to the scaffold, and the cheers, applause, and joy were universal. But when, at the end of the street, it was seen that the escort turned to the left, in front of the old Comédie Française, and, entering the Rue de la Liberté (now Rue Monsieur le Prince), made for the Barrier d'Enfer and the Orléans road, the crowd realised that the "tiger" was about to escape them. The horses were stopped, the traces cut, and, with threats, blows, insults, and howling, the carriage was stormed, jolted back to the Carrousel, and pushed into the courtyard of the Committee of General Safety.<sup>1</sup>

Billaud was locked in a small room, the window of which looked out on one of the side entrances of the Convention. He remained there until evening, enduring with a careless air the insulting curiosity of his former colleagues. At seven in the evening someone proposed that it was time to depart. A chaise with six horses was brought; he took his place, and the carriage, surrounded by a strong escort of gendarmes, set off at full gallop down the Rue Saint-Honoré.<sup>2</sup> Forty-eight thousand men were under arms; a hundred cannon with lighted matches, were placed along the Tuileries. The people were quiet at first, but in the Champs-Élysées the passers-by got excited; the women cried "Stop! Stop!" The crowd rushed forward, as though it had received a word of command, pursuing the carriage like a pack of infuriated hounds. The escort was overtaken at the barrier; the carriage was unharnessed, and dragged back in triumph to the Place de la Révolution—to the spot where, for a whole year, the guillotine had been enthroned. Everybody cheered, and the army remained passive.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Messenger du soir*, of the 15th of Germinal, Year III., quoted by Aulard.

<sup>2</sup> "About six o'clock, the eight deputies who were to be taken to the fortress of Ham left for their destination in the midst of a squadron of gendarmes, who took the road towards the Chaillot barrier at full gallop, with drawn sabres, and crying, 'Down with the Jacobins.'"—*Courrier Républicain*, 15th of Germinal, quoted by Aulard.

<sup>3</sup> "There was some fighting, some traces were cut, a horse killed, and a few people wounded. However, after a good deal of noise, peace was restored, and the deputies left; but it was not the same with Barère and Billaud. The carriages which contained them were stopped in the Place

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Billaud understood at last that he was really "condemned." Brought back to the Tuileries, he remained there until two in the morning—not until then did the gendarmes escorting the accursed wretch dare to set out through sleeping and deserted Paris. The chaise which conveyed him left by the Monceau gate, and at dawn was rolling along the high road to Orléans. At every relay, at every stage, there were the same curses, the same infuriated mob. The people of Tours had determined to throw Billaud into the Loire, and the carriage had to pass through the city at night. At Poitiers and Niort, dirt and stones were thrown; on April 12th he entered La Rochelle, his native town, which he had left thirteen years previously.

His father and mother hastened to the port; they tenderly embraced the convict, and were with him for some hours. That was the only oasis in his journey to Tenare, for on the morrow the infernal torture recommenced, with the cell on the Ile Oléron, the confinement in "the lions' den" on board the dispatch boat, *Expédition*, the voyage of forty-five days under a burning sky. The captain of the ship had orders to throw his passenger overboard in case of an attack by an English vessel.

Billaud did not utter a complaint; he passed his days seated in the stern, looking at the ocean, in a solitude and silence so sad that even the sailors were "touched." At Cayenne, he was shut up in the fort, twenty hours of solitary cell per day. After six months, he was removed to Sinnamary—a fever-stricken desert, generally fatal to newcomers, to which the Government sent those convicts whom they wanted to be rid of quickly. Billaud-Varenne had reached the limit of human distress—for him there was nothing beyond but the tomb.

After she had seen him, on April 2nd, worried by the crowd that was howling round the house, his wife, dazed with grief had remained alone, deserted even by the neighbours; the name which she bore turned away from her even those who

de la Révolution. The mob cut the traces of the horses, seized the carriages, and dragged them back to the Committee of General Safety."  
—Same source.



‘QUILL PROPORTION’

Print issued at the time of the Thermidorian Reaction, symbolising the disproportion between Billaut Varenne's crime and his punishment

(From the collection of BAI ON DE VINCK.)



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were careless and indifferent. She did not know where her husband had been taken, and did not dare to inquire what was his fate, when, on May 4th—after a month of anxiety and solitude—she received a letter from her father-in-law, announcing Billaud's arrival at La Rochelle and his temporary imprisonment at Oléron. She replied at once. Her letter, which has been preserved, is very correctly written; she assures "her dear papa and dear mamma that she will do all she can to get reunited to her husband, and that she will share his lot, whatever it may be, and will be only too happy if she can obtain permission to rejoin him who, during ten years, made her so happy." She has sent, by the diligence, a little box containing "a few clothes that are absolutely needed." A second letter is dated May 26th. Angelica has learned that Billaud is about to sail for Cayenne; she is in despair; she cannot rejoin him, "and the poor fellow has nothing."

"I beg of you, my dear papa, if there is still time, to get a few louis for him at any cost; I will pay you back faithfully. Moreover, I am sending off two cases; the one contains 300 books, and in the other there is a clock. You can, if you like, my dear papa, sell them at once . . . I ask a million pardons for all the trouble I am giving you, but, my dear papa, I have no one but you in the world. I have lost all; my brother has just died of grief, and my sister died two months ago."<sup>1</sup>

Poor Angelica was compelled to pawn one after the other all the articles of furniture in her lodgings; and she had temporarily quitted the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs. She concealed herself somewhere in the maze of streets which surround the Louvre. She had taken a false name; to her neighbours she was "Citoyenne Rousselot,"<sup>2</sup> but she cared little for these troubles, the grief that crushed her was "the being deprived of her adored husband."

"I cannot keep my promise to him; I cannot survive so many sorrows; I am afflicted even unto death; all my

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Bégis. *Mémoires inédits de Billaud-Varenne*. Biography.

<sup>2</sup> Her address is: "To Citoyenne Galand, at the house of Citizen Pajou, sculptor, opposite the Louvre, to be forwarded to Citoyenne Rousselot."

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strength has left me. . . . Poor Billaud, he who was my father, my country, my all. He knew all my misfortunes and consoled all my woes. If I could see him once more, I could die content."

She thus loved the man "whom an indignant civilisation has cast forth amongst savages"; she alone knew "his beautiful pure soul, his innocence." In order to obtain permission to embark and rejoin him she decided to show herself; she knew she was still beautiful, "in spite of her deplorable situation," and that she could move to pity the most inexorable hearts.

"I have already won the hearts of some who can do everything," she wrote triumphantly on June 5th. She had asked for her passport and sent off "some bales" to La Rochelle, but she did not leave; she was ill and without money. Then it was that Johnson appeared on the scene.

Harry Johnson was a rich American ship-owner, who had long resided in France and had become—like many other foreigners—an enthusiastic, crack-brained Republican after the fashion of the Prince of Hesse and Baron Cloutz. He was of weak health, and (in 1795) more than fifty years old. Was he personally acquainted with Billaud-Varenne? That is doubtful; but he greatly admired his "political bluster," and it is to be surmised that Angelica did not displease him. Knowing that she was without money and could not embark, Johnson paid her a visit. He had plenty of money; he would fit out a privateer, carry off Billaud from Guiana, and take him to the United States. But the consent of the outlaw was first necessary; the offer was secretly transmitted to him, and the reply received three months later. He refused: "The National Convention, which has unjustly condemned him, has alone the right to proclaim his deliverance." In his hut, down in the depressing desert, his spirit was still untamed, and his obstinacy was discouraging. Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio and mother of the Gracchi, would have seemed a mere hysterical female by the side of such a man, and the weak Angelica was not a Cornelia. She did her best, but she felt that her little mind could not match the gigantic mind of her unsociable spouse. Women, it has been said, only



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really love men who are stronger than themselves; for if their pleasure is to command, their happiness is to obey. That may be so, but it is a happiness which it would be imprudent to inflict upon them too long—they tire of it.

Angelica had still made up her mind to start, but in her letters to her father-in-law her plans about emigrating were more hazy. She still talked about “him who alone attaches her to life,” but her protestations lacked enthusiasm. She recommended him “not to ship the bales—only keep them in a dry place.” Then the correspondence slackened. In November the Directoire issued a decree authorising her to receive the balance of the parliamentary indemnity due to Billaud and to share his exile. The Minister of the Navy even received an order “to furnish her, at the expense of the Republic, with all the means of transport necessary to that effect.”<sup>1</sup> She could not make up her mind, however; she still loved Billaud, and now exchanged letters with him, but the communications were irregular—and took so long. She got tired; and when she sent him books, money, or effects, the ships which carried them were invariably captured. Then we find her at La Rochelle, staying with her father-in-law and ready to go to sea—it was February 1796—when a letter arrived from Billaud enjoining her to give up the project. He was afraid she could not bear the voyage, the hot climate, the fevers. So she did not start.

She returned to Paris, where Johnson awaited her. This Yankee original had thought of an admirable plan. She shall get a divorce and become his wife. He was infirm, worn-out, always ill, and certain to die soon. He would leave her all his fortune, and Billaud could profit by it. The idea was sublime—also absurd—but with that strange infirmity of some women which makes them unable to see both sides of a question, Angelica looked at it from only the favourable point of view. After some hesitation she gave her consent—Billaud was not consulted. The divorce was pronounced—“on account of the absence of the husband”—on January 18th, 1797; and ten days later Harry Johnson

<sup>1</sup> M. Victorien Sardou's collection of autographs.

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married, at the Mairie of the 11th Arrondissement, Angelica Doye, formerly the wife of Billaud-Varenne.<sup>1</sup>

She left the Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs, and resided, with her new husband, at 9, Passage des Petits Pères, a long narrow alley which stood on part of the ground now occupied by the Rue de la Banque. It was understood that the American—as much from “personal dignity” as out of regard to his friend Billaud—should demand nothing from his wife but her friendship, and should claim only the rights “of a protector and adopted father.” For the object of their union was “to work conjointly to ameliorate the outlaw’s lot.” In order to put these fine resolutions into execution, they neglected to inform him of what had happened. He was thenceforth divorced without knowing it.

Angelica, always a good-natured girl, still loved him, but never wrote to him. Billaud, senior, kept up communication with his son, but never alluded, in his letters, to his former daughter-in-law, of whose second marriage he was not ignorant. This correspondence, like most others of that period, is very deceptive. It might be expected that persons who had taken part in such great events, and were now thrown such a long distance apart, would be prolix as to the details of their adventures and the incidents of their private life. Nothing of the kind; they exchanged every six months a short note which said nothing. They prated about “their irresistible longing for everything which has claim on their mind,” of “their serenity, and the consoling evidence of a clear conscience.” Letters which might reveal so much to us are generally full of nothing but gushing sentiment.

<sup>1</sup> “It was then that Johnson proposed that she should get a divorce and marry him, in order that he might give her all his fortune, by which Billaud might afterwards profit. Billaud’s wife was ill, and without money; she had recently lost her mother and her two brothers, when Johnson accorded her his succour and protection. She loved her husband very much; they had lived happily together more than ten years, and she still hoped to be re-united to him. For a long time, she deferred giving a reply; then she informed her husband’s father of the proposal and asked his advice. She appears to have obtained a tacit consent at least. At last, finding herself devoid of means, deserted by all whom she had known in the time of her husband’s prosperity, and obliged to submit to the worst privations, she ended by accepting Johnson, whose proposals had become more and more pressing, as he wished, he said, that all his fortune should one day revert to Billaud-Varenne.—A. Bégis, Unpublished Memoirs.

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Therefore, for nearly two years, Billaud was not particularly astonished that he had no news of Angelica. Not until October 1798 did he begin to suspect that she "must have given his parent some cause for dissatisfaction." Two years later—still in ignorance of what had happened—he pleaded his wife's cause to his parents, pompously remarking that "when the force of the storm is abated there is time for reflection, and we are then disposed to repair the loss that the tempest has occasioned." His parents did not reply, and matters remained as they were. Angelica had left Paris and was living with Johnson in the country. But neither had forgotten the unhappy outcast. She offered "to send him twenty-five louis"—she had twenty-five put by for another occasion. She wrote to Billaud, senior, who, she knew, was in poverty: "do not trouble about money; if I am still sad, I still retain the hope of being useful to that innocent and oppressed being; I revolve a thousand projects in my head to release him from his terrible situation. I do not know whether I shall succeed." Johnson, for his part, was thinking about preparing a ship to go in person to console "his friend." The interview would have been rather sensational, but it did not take place. Johnson was a man of his word; he had promised not to live to be an old man, and he kept his promise after they had been married three years. On December 26th, 1799, he left Angelica a widow, and heiress of all his fortune—more than half-a-million—which she was glad to have "to benefit Billaud." So little did she understand the fierce character of the man with whom she was proud of "having lived ten years in the most complete unity of sentiments and views."

At Sinnamary he had a hut in one of the outbuildings of the fort, a convict's hut, without a single book or a tool. In a few days, inaction made him ill, he was attacked by a fever, and taken, almost dying, to the military hospital of Cayenne, which was under the charge of the "Grey Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres." During the Terror they had refused to take any oath, or to infringe the regulations of their Order in any way, but, nevertheless, the Government had allowed them to

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stop, on account of the important services they rendered the colony.

They may have been a bit frightened when the "tiger" was brought to them, but they were much more astonished when they saw the invalid. His meekness, patience, and the apparent calmness of his mind quite perplexed the holy sisters who nursed him. They took it in turns to sit by the side of his bed, and to distract his thoughts from melancholy subjects; they told him, in a low voice, simple stories of innocent persons who had been persecuted and finally reaped their reward.<sup>1</sup> He, whose name had made the earth tremble, listened to them like a good child. "Their impressive and consoling words calmed his startled mind," and penetrated his distressed heart.

"How I admire your virtues, my worthy sisters," he said, "when it is I—I, the melancholy object of general execration, on whom you lavish such pains and kindness. Your generosity surpasses, in my eyes, the most noble acts of great minds." He was their privileged invalid; they laughed familiarly with him, without constraint. They spoke to him of "Our Lord Jesus Christ," and he replied, "Supreme Being," and they understood each other perfectly. They saw that "he did not serve God in the way they did," but they boldly assured him that "his resignation must be due to Our Saviour's help." No doubt he sometimes broke out in a way which must have startled the good nuns, but they took care not to show it. One day, when they were speaking of his political adversaries, a nun had the courage to say, "Our Lord, when on the Cross, pardoned those who had put him to

<sup>1</sup> The zeal and the ingenuity of the sisters were remarkable. They had placed Billaud in the officers' quarters, but an order came that he was to be removed to the convicts' ward. He was nearly dying; the convicts—of whom, by orders from headquarters, he was to be the companion—were nothing but slaves, brutalised by vice and crime; and the rules forbade that any colonist was to be admitted amongst them, however criminal he might be. The Grey Sisters obeyed, however; they had been ordered to remove Billaud to the convicts' ward, and they removed him there—but they first placed all the convicts in an adjoining room, the door of which they concealed by a large cupboard. "You are so ill," said the Abbess to Billaud, "that, in order to be able to give you more attention, we thought it better to place you here. We are sorry we are not able to give you a room where you would be farther removed from these poor wretches."

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death." - And I must stand silently, - not only pardon my enemies but I have a supreme contempt for them!"

He was cured and then he left the hospital to return to Sinnamary, the address of the Grey Sisters gave him a letter of recommendation and thanks to them he found a hospitable house where he could live his life. He was without money—almost without food. He lived and worked about the period of his illness and all that we know is that he lived on "the commission of the Sisters."

In November 1971 the entire Tamm was brought to Sinnamary, a number of prisoners and amongst them was some of Billard's inner circle in the Contrebande. They were allocated two cells in the cell in which he resided but in spite of the supposed proximity, the two never refused to say a word to him. The prison warden could overcome the barrier of the walls by communicating. Billard was not interested in this as he used to keep himself up in a fortification of silence. The communication was not, however, the same as the one of the man whose name is mentioned in the meeting, passed in the following way.

[illegible]

de la ...  
à la ...

[illegible]

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felt that he was utterly deserted, and two thousand leagues from all his relatives. "What courage I need, not to succumb," he wrote.

An undeniable courage, composed of pride and obstinacy. He was firmly resolved to convert his punishment into an apotheosis—to pose as a pure and innocent victim—and he played his part in epic fashion.

In June 1800 he leased the farm of Orvilliers for twelve years, for the sum of 1,200 francs paid annually;<sup>1</sup> but, as he had not a single *sou* of his own, one of the residents in the island—a Citizen Lambert—consented to be surety for him. Billaud accepted; the prejudice against him was growing weaker. Yet he was but rarely seen; very few people could boast of having heard his voice, but the inhabitants of the Coast quarter, as they returned home, often saw him standing motionless on a hill at evening, gazing at the distant sea and the setting sun. He wore a jacket and trousers of coarse linen, a wide-brimmed hat, and thick shoes. He had picked up a dog, to which he had given the name of "Patience," and which faithfully followed him everywhere.

Captain Bernard, one of the Governor's aides-de-camp, came to see him one day, quite joyful, for he brought him the good news of the constitution of the Consular government, and the pardon granted by Bonaparte to all transported convicts. He offered Billaud the Governor's compliments and his own, and his congratulations on the termination of his exile. Billaud smiled, took the letter which the officer handed him, read it slowly, without any emotion, and invited his visitor to rest in a hammock, and drink a glass of punch. Then he entered the house to write a reply to the Governor's letter. A few moments later he reappeared. He had written these lines with a firm hand:—

"I know, from history, that the Roman consuls held certain rights from the people, but the right to pardon, which the French consuls arrogate to themselves, not having originated from the same source, I cannot accept the amnesty which they pretend to grant me."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished correspondence, Victorien Sanjou's collection.

<sup>2</sup> *La Nouvelle Minerve*, 1833. Billaud-Vareine at Cayenne.

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The officer went away, struck dumb with admiration and astonishment.

This led to an acquaintance between the two men. Captain Bernard, curious to see more of this fierce and haughty character, often went to Orvilliers. He would have liked to question the old *Conventionnel* about the Revolution, but, at the very first word, Billaud cut him short. "Young man, when the bones of two generations which follow yours shall be whitened, history will seize upon that great question. Come and see my palm-trees." He expressed himself in these semi-biblical words because they suited the part he had chosen to play—that of a misunderstood and persecuted patriarch. On other occasions, however, he was less laconic.

"I suffer justly," he said one day, "for I have shed human blood, but if I were again in the same circumstances, I should act the same again. It was necessary to employ extreme measures, and I gave myself up to the task. Some gave their lives; I did more—I gave my name. I allowed people to doubt what I really was—posterity even will not do me justice. I have the more merit and glory in my own eyes."

No doubt it was from Captain Bernard that Billaud learned of the second marriage and widowhood of his wife. Bernard had met Angelica in Paris, at the house of Prieur, a former colleague of the Committee of Public Safety. The beauty of the young widow had struck him; she wore a necklace on which was suspended a miniature—a portrait of Billaud. She inquired about him; asking "if he still kept that inexplicable yellow wig?" Bernard tried to obtain from Billaud a word of indulgence for her, but the stern proconsul remained inexorable. "There are some faults that are unpardonable," was all he said. Three months later, in writing to his father, he remarked, "I have swallowed this grief as I have so many others, and think no more about it."

His vexation was probably lessened by the fact that some time previously a Swiss, named Sieger, residing in the colony, had procured for him a quick and intelligent young negress, in whom Billaud had quickly become interested. She was named Brigitte. It must be to her that he alludes,

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we suspect, in one of his letters to Sieger. He states that "he is very well pleased with the little slave girl I have just received. She appears to be very gentle and docile. When she was separated from her companion, and found herself alone in a boat, she was seized with despair, and tried to throw herself into the river. She was very melancholy for two days, but being treated well, her grief soon abated."

Brigitte was hardly fifteen or sixteen when she became Billaud's property; he was, at that time, forty-eight. She soon, and without any effort, satisfied the cravings of his empty heart. He found in her a being who felt no repugnance at his past life; she listened to him eagerly; in her company he could unweariedly criticise the perfidies of which he had been the innocent victim, and "the insults which had been heaped upon his immaculate soul." He set her free at once, and she lavished upon him kindnesses and attentions to which he had long been a stranger. To Sieger, his only friend, he made no mystery of the situation; in a language larded with old quotations and reminiscences of Jean Jacques, he invited him to accept at his "hermitage" the hospitality of Philémon and Baucis. Brigitte managed everything about the house, tillage, the plantations, the garden, cattle-rearing, the negroes, and especially the master—that uncompromising master whom the feline grace of a little savage had suddenly tamed. It was he who was the slave now; she was devoted to this man, whom she guessed to be unfortunate, and saw was deserted. She tried to give him courage by relating all the catastrophes, blows, humiliations, and insults she had met with in the course of her short life. The ex-president of the National Convention and this lisping infant compared their respective careers. When she saw that he was a prey to one of those crises of melancholy in which he was often buried, or when he broke out into terrible anger against his negroes, Brigitte soothed him with her calm voice; "What, sir, you who have encountered so many dangers to give way under the attacks of these vermin?"

For Billaud-Varenne had negroes—his own property, bought with his own money—and their ways and habits annoyed him.



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The comedy of history abounds in grotesque changes and contrarities, but we doubt whether any collector of autographs has ever come across a more singular instance of them than is to be found in the following document, of which we give an exact copy :

"I acknowledge the receipt of the sum of one thousand eight hundred and forty one francs, ten *sous*, in payment for the sale of a negro, named Étienne, in conformity with the agreement made with the purchaser of the said negro."<sup>1</sup>

And this is signed "Billaud-Varenne"—the name of the man who, when he was a member of the Committee of Public Safety, solemnly decreed the abolition of slavery. His Utopian ideas had undergone a great change since he went to reside in Guiana. It would be interesting to collect all his fine speeches about the liberty of the black and collate them with the stinging sentences of the brutally frank letter which Billaud-Varenne wrote to his friend Sieger. "I have learned but too well that these people are born with a multitude of vices, and are devoid both of reason and feeling, and that nothing but a sharp sense of fear can keep them in order." At last, he could stand it no longer, and got rid of "his menagerie." His menagerie consisted of five negroes—Cato, Tranche-Montagne, Hippolyte, Nicolas, and Joseph—and three negresses, one of whom—did he give her that name?—was called Antoinette. There was also another negro, named Lindor, but he was ill—"swollen up like a drum, and it would be useless to try and sell him in that state." These unfortunate wretches, whom he valued much less than he did his milch-cows, these degraded beings whom he had to keep in subjection with blows and stripes, were, perhaps, happier than he was, and excited his jealousy. He speaks with a sort of envy of "the beastly way in which they sleep from Saturday night to Monday morning." Have these brutes, then, no nightmares to worry them? Can he sleep like that?

Years passed : he had long since quitted the Orvilliers farm, and founded another plantation—the Hermitage—but it did not please him. His letters are nothing but lamenta-

<sup>1</sup> Victorien Sardou's collection.

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tions and grievances ; never an allusion to the past, but complaints about "his wretched position," or "his obstinately persecuted virtue." Every day he spent some hours at his desk, but what he wrote was not, as we should have expected, recollections of his sudden rise and his "astounding fall," but a sort of dissertation on love, interlarded with bits of verse, quotations, and worn-out aphorisms, such as "Love likes to be as free in its choice as in its favours ; it wears a bandage over its eyes." If any allusion to the experience acquired in politics did slip in it was rather of a sentimental nature, as, "The scaffold ! Great heavens ! Has it ever been of any use to improve morals ? In what age, in what country, has it succeeded in preventing crime ? "

He was not interested in what went on in the world. In 1809, when Guiana was surrendered to the Portuguese, he did not trouble himself in the least ; in 1814 he wrote : "I am not posted up in political news ; in the first place because I am not curious, and then my solitude is so great that the world might be turned upside down without my suspecting it." Yet, when the Bourbons definitely returned to power, in 1815, he feared their vengeance. He had suffered so many bitternesses and disillusiones, and solitude had become insupportable ; he wished to fly from that cursed country and "the fearful prospect of being exposed in his last days to the treachery of the negroes." So he sold his slaves "one with another," for 5,000 francs. He got together some money—very little, for the Hermitage, when put up for sale, found no purchaser—and left, taking Brigitte and Patience with him. On May 5th, 1816, he landed at Newport, in the United States. Snow was falling, and Brigitte was cold—she regretted the sun of Cayenne ; even Patience would not leave the fireside. Hotel life, too, did not suit Billaud ; he had to dress to go down to the *table d'hôte*, talk to people he did not know, escape the curious, and elude indiscreet questions.

Billaud—followed by his black Antigone and his dog—arrived at New York on May 31st. He hoped to be able to live by his pen, but the first publisher whom he addressed asked for "an advance for expenses," and the author prudently withdrew. The society of his fellow-men was repugnant to

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him ; he passed his days shut up in his room, looking on the map for a refuge where "it would be lawful for an old republican to die a free man." Finally, he decided upon San Domingo, the climate of which would suit Brigitte, and, after sixteen days at sea, he settled, in September 1816, at Port-au-Prince. He hired a hut, consisting of two small rooms, and chose the inner chamber, which looked out over some gardens and a common, and arranged "his furniture"—a bed in an alcove hung with a tattered wall-paper, and an old arm-chair, brought from France.

Soon after his arrival, he became acquainted with a young mulatto brought up in Paris, named Colombel, and, through him, obtained a small position in the offices of the chief judge, M. Sabourin, and every day he went regularly to the court. Then he returned and supped with Brigitte, who was both servant and mistress of the house. Sometimes he received a visit from a doctor, M. Mirambeau, who liked to talk with him.

He lived thus for three years. Attacked by chronic dysentery, he rapidly wasted away ; his face became paler day by day, his cheeks more hollow, and his hair, which was formerly black and flat to his head, turned white. He had given up the legendary "lion's mane" ; his hands were dry and bony as those of a skeleton, but his eyes retained a look "of terrible fixity." He was still, however, "polite and attentive," full of kindness and urbanity ; all who saw him found in him "something of a former great power."<sup>1</sup>

Brigitte never left him ; his eyes followed her quick and supple movements as she walked about the room. *Nigra sum, sed formosa*, he said. He lived "in profound tranquillity, even surrounded by very flattering considerations" ; but, at sixty-three years of age, his health was ruined.

Early in June 1819 he felt weaker, and made up his mind to go into the country.

"'I am going,' he said to Dr. Chervin, who attended him, 'to breathe the air of the hills for a few weeks. It cured me two years ago, but I feel very worn out—very worn out indeed, doctor.'"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *La Nouvelle Minerve*, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.

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M. Chervin asked if he would like to have the country-house of one of his friends.

“No: I am going to a poor cabin on the Mornes-Charbonnières, where I shall be well received.”—“At whose house?”—“That of the negress who washes for you. I shall rest myself there, in a very pretty spot. Will you come and see me?”—“Yes. When do you leave?”—“In a couple of days—next Monday.”—“How are you going, and by what road?”—“I am going on the back of the donkey that brings the clean linen to town.”

“On the day stated—June 7th—two donkeys were brought to the door of his house; the arm-chair was fastened on the back of the one donkey, which was already loaded with linen; then, with the assistance of the women, the doctor lifted up the old proconsul, and placed him on the back of the other donkey, where, he said, he was quite comfortable, and felt better than he did in the house. He smiled, and appeared a little more lively. He thanked the doctor and pressed the hands of all those who surrounded him. ‘I hope to see you one of these days at the Mornes; you ought to come—it is a beautiful spot! If I do not see you again, be happy. Farewell!’ He was much affected, and Brigitte, who was very affable, said good-bye to all her neighbours. The travellers started, and as long as they could see their friends, they continued to make signs of affection until they were hidden from view by the high hedges and foliage.”<sup>1</sup>

When he arrived at the washerwoman’s house, Billaud-Varenne was dying, being quite exhausted by the fatigue of the short journey. He passed his last days in the big arm-chair, “which came from France.” On June 13th he had a touch of fever, which made him rather excited. He was heard to murmur that, “so far from repenting, he died proud of the usefulness and disinterestedness of his life.” “My bones,” he added, “will, at all events, repose in a land that loves liberty.” Then he was silent for a long time; his life was slowly ebbing away.

“But I hear the voice of posterity, which accuses me of

<sup>1</sup> *La Nouvelle Minerve*, 1835.

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having been too sparing of the blood of the tyrants of Europe." Having uttered these terrible words, his head dropped, his eyes closed, and peacefully and quietly his breath ceased.<sup>1</sup>

Angelica Doye, the divorced wife of Billaud-Varenne, and widow of Johnson, after having done all she could to become reconciled to her first husband, and obtain his pardon, eventually became resigned to the situation. She married, on April 2nd, 1808, a rich merchant, M. Cousin-Duparc, "much younger than herself." At her death, which occurred on February 14th, 1815, she left him the whole of her fortune.

Brigitte inherited the property of the old *Conventionnel*. By a will, dated from Cayenne, he left her—excluding the property he possessed in France—the whole of his estate in Guiana, and everything thereunto appertaining, "not only," he said, "to repay her for the services she has done for me during eighteen years, but as a fresh and complete acknowledgment of her constant attachment in following me wherever I went."

The legacy was not of much importance; nevertheless, Brigitte—we cannot ascertain at what period, or for what purpose, she changed her name to "Virginie"—was enabled to purchase a small house at Port-au-Prince. M. Jules Claretie was informed by a doctor of San Domingo—of whom he had made inquiries concerning the descendants of Camille Desmoulins—that the old negress, the widow of Billaud-Varenne, was still alive, though bowed with years, as late as 1874.

<sup>1</sup> *La Nouvelle Minerve*, 1835. The last years of Billaud-Varenne.

## HANRIOT

M<sup>ME</sup>. SAVOURÉ—whose husband was proprietor of a school of some importance in the Rue de la Clef—was terribly bothered in 1793.

A stranger—that is to say a stranger to the quarter—had recently come to reside in the house next to hers, and his popularity had rapidly increased. His name was François Hanriot. He was a little man, with a clean-shaven, ruddy face, blinking eyelids, and a receding forehead. A nervous affection made his face twitch every now and then; his voice was generally low and husky, but could thunder when occasion required.<sup>1</sup>

Although no one knew whence he came, it was known that he had tried a number of professions. He had been a choir-boy, and even beadle; then, servant to an attorney of the Parliament—Me. Formé, Rue de l'Observance, near the Cordeliers. Some people asserted that they knew him when he kept a dram-shop; afterwards he had dragged a hand-barrow of hosiery from fair to fair.<sup>2</sup> He asserted that he had been through the American campaign, under Lafayette. It was known that he had been a clerk at the city gates, and reports said that he had conveniently burned down his office just before the auditor came round to verify the accounts. In January 1793 he was a *rentier*, and had just come to live in the Rue de la Clef, to the great joy of the patriots of that section, which was that of the Sans Culottes. A legend—which he did not contradict—declared

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt. *Tableau de Paris pendant la Révolution*.

<sup>2</sup> Challamel. *Dictionnaire de la Révolution*. These rumours are quoted merely as specimens of what the Parisians knew, or believed, about Hanriot; for the authentic history of his life remains a profound mystery.



HENRIOT.

(From a picture in the possession of M. LOUIS LELOIR, Secrétaire of the Comédie-Française.)





that he had taken part in the September massacres.<sup>1</sup> It was also said that he had denounced his mother;<sup>2</sup> for which reason his flatterers called him Brutus—which was the highest possible praise in those days.

Mme. Sabouré was the more disturbed about her neighbour, because Hanriot—who made himself very busy in the section—had brought forward some proposals which did not at all suit her. One idea, on which he was always harping, was to tax the rich—"to call upon them with a bill in one hand and a pistol in the other." The ex-dram-shopkeeper had, moreover, resolved to purge the section of every emblem of aristocracy, and, as the façade of Savouré's academy was ornamented with a series of busts of antique gods and famous Romans, had one night invaded the house, at the head of a band of his comrades, and proceeded to carry off these anti-revolutionary effigies. Some days later he took it into his head to compel Mme. Savouré to let her pupils dine in the street. Fraternal meals were much in fashion in those days—an invention due to Prudhomme. "There ought," he had written, "to be a table laid in every street, at which all the citizens might sit and fraternise. Each one should bring his own dish, if he can, and he who has prepared nothing shall share with his neighbour (*sic*). All the food ought to be mixed and compounded together, so that no one shall eat his own dish, but that of his neighbour."

The project appeared sublime—though not, perhaps, to Mme. Savouré, who, as she lived in a poor quarter, would have to furnish food and utensils for all the inhabitants of the street. The meal itself did not much bother her, but what did worry her was the apprehension that some of the citizens, her brothers, might also wish to share her silver plate. But she got out of the difficulty like the ingenious housekeeper she was. At the appointed hour, the cloth was laid, and each of the guests found in front of him a piece of

<sup>1</sup> "Hanriot, the man who tore out the entrails of the *Princesse de Lamballe*." Dauban, *La démagogie en 1793*. As a matter of fact, a person named Hanriot did take part in the September massacres, but—in spite of the assertion of Granier de Cassagnac—he does not seem to have been the man who was afterwards General of the Revolutionary Army.

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, *Tableau de Paris*.

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bread, a quarter of cheese, and an artichoke—all articles which could be eaten without the aid of forks and spoons. Hanriot appeared satisfied, and he was a man with whom it was well to keep on good terms, for he had become the idol of the washerwomen of the quarter, whose influence had procured him the rank of captain of a company of the section.

All these trifling circumstances are, however, only traditional, for there are no documents existing to confirm them. After patient investigation, I do not believe that it would be possible to learn anything authentic about the early life of Hanriot. In the archives of Nanterre, his native village, I have found his certificate of baptism, which is dated December 3rd, 1759. He was the son of Edme Hanriot and Marguerite Davoine, both of whom lived in the house of a former treasurer of France, and *bourgeois* of Paris, and of whom they were—probably—the servants. The godfather of the child was a *Sieur François Coypel*; the godmother was named Marie Murat.

On November 16th, 1787, François Hanriot lost his father—a man 72 years of age, born at Sormery, in Burgundy, of a family of labourers. I do not know when Marguerite Davoine (who came from the same village as her husband) died, nor what circumstances induce this worthy couple to settle at Nanterre. Hanriot had an elder sister, Marie Cécile, born in 1753 at Sormery; married to a master turner named Lassus, living at Paris at the *Quinze Vingts* market. She was divorced in the Year II. Such was the family. Except for this dry, but precise, information, I have not been able to find a trace anywhere of aught concerning the youth of Hanriot. He springs into history at the end of May, 1793, and, at one bound, reaches the summit. It may be remarked, however, that at the time of his amazing elevation, he was not, as has been said, poor and needy. Besides his little lodging in the *Rue de la Clef*, he had an apartment in the *Rue du Battoir*, the inventory of which includes furniture that, if peculiar, was comfortable—rush chairs and couches covered in crimson damask; 47 engravings, under glass in red frames, and “representing

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different subjects of the Revolution"; the complete works of J. J. Rousseau; three shirts, a blue handkerchief, a pair of thread stockings, and a magnificent *secrétaire* of speckled mahogany ornamented with brass. Hanriot also possessed other furniture in an apartment he had hired in the Rue Saint-Joseph.

The Parisians have rushed blindly into many revolutions, but the one about which they understood least was that of June 2nd, 1793. On that day—under pressure from an armed people—the Convention sacrificed to the Commune of Paris twenty-nine of its wisest, most eloquent and most vilified members; but it may safely be asserted that not one of the eighty thousand supernumeraries who, on that day, helped to intimidate the Assembly understood anything of the plot. Even the most sagacious men cudgelled their brains in vain. "What does it all mean? Who moves the springs? What do they want?" ingenuously asked Garat, who was a Minister. "The greater number of Parisians long to know what they ought to do," said Mme. Roland. The citizens obeyed the call of the drum or the tocsin, collected round the flag which was planted before each captain's door, drew up in line, started left-foot forwards, and marched resolutely without knowing where or why. On May 31st, the Observatory battalion thought it was going to take part in a general review of the National Guard; that of the Halles believed that the object was to obtain a new tariff of provisions, and "to slay for ever the hydra of fiscal laws." The Mail section shut itself up in the Palais Royal, determined to defend itself to the last man against the Saint-Antoine section, which had come prepared to do battle. A massacre was imminent, but it occurred to somebody that it would be best to have an explanation before bringing up the guns, and the commander of the Mail section fainted from indignation when he learned that his company "passed for royalists." The blunders ended in general embracings, barrels of wine staved in, and torchlight processions; the plans of the abettors of discord were upset by the candid good-temper of the people of Paris.

There was little laughing, however, on June 2nd. The

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weather was splendid ; the workshops were closed, and whole families sat at the shop-doors from early in the morning "to see the insurrection pass !" Eighty thousand men were massed round the Convention ; the Carrousel, the quays, the Tuileries garden, the Place de la Révolution, and the bridges bristled with bayonets. There were National Guards from Saint-Germain, Melun, and Courbevoie ; there were three thousand artillerymen and sixty-three guns ; and furnaces to make red-hot balls were burning at the entrance to the Champs Elysées. There were also troops from Marseilles, and Rosenthal's German Legion ; but all alike were ignorant that they had been brought there to overawe the Convention, and were unanimously persuaded that they had come to protect it.

At the Assembly the emotion was great. Were they to give way to the force of bayonets, and decree the arrest of the moderate members ? Who commanded the revolutionary army ? No one knew. Who had had the audacity to mass it around the Convention ? No one could say. Probably there was some misunderstanding, and it was hoped that all the men under arms would disperse at a word from their representatives. The deputies silently descended from their benches, and, with bare heads, solemnly traversed the ante-chambers of the Tuileries. The procession appeared under the great portico ; in front marched the president, Hérault de Séchelles, a fine man of a good figure, who alone has his head covered "as a sign of mourning." In the courtyard, under the bright sun, muskets, cannon and uniforms glistened ; there was an anxious silence ; many hearts beat at seeing that terrifying Assembly, at whose name all Europe trembled, advance, perplexed, towards the compact ranks of the troops. Many thought of the morning of August 10th, when, from the same palace, the King came sadly forth to hold his last review.

Hérault de Séchelles slowly inclined to the right towards the Staff. He stopped a few paces from a be-plumed General, who from his horse regarded him impassively. There was an agonising pause. The President, without uncovering, read the decree ordering the armed force to retire. The Staff grinned. Hérault, in a conciliatory voice, demanded :

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“What do the people want? The Convention desires nothing but their happiness.” Then the officer, drawing his sabre—and making sure that his hat was tightly on, caused his horse to rear, and in a voice that could be heard at the Louvre—“a roar that would silence a town”—commanded : “Gunnery ! to your guns !”

The soldiers obeyed ; someone grasped Hérault by the arm, and dragged him away ; the *conventionnels* returned to the vestibule hastily, trying, as well as they could, to keep the appearance of a procession, terrified and groaning. One of them — Lacroix — wept from humiliation. All, turning towards the troops, and pointing to the unknown General asked, “Who is he?” The little, clean-shaven, tidy, ruddy-faced man, with the blinking eyes, was unknown to everybody. When they had returned to the assembly-hall, one of the secretaries read the list of the twenty-nine deputies to be proscribed, and with bowed heads the Convention voted a decree and delivered to death its most illustrious members—Vergniaud, Barbaroux, Buzot, Louvet, and others belonging to that noble Gironde that was born to glory on the same day as Liberty.

It is said that whilst the deputies were listening, in deep sorrow, to the reading of the decree of proscription, the General, who had bent the National Assembly to his will, had the audacity to enter the *buvette* of the Assembly and order a glass of wine. Many then learned his name for the first time—it was Hanriot, who, two days before, had been but a simple captain, and whom the Commune had appointed General commanding the Paris army. As soon as he was sure of victory, Hanriot calmly left the palace, mounted his horse, and marched off at the head of his soldiers, who, with drums beating, regained their respective sections. In the Rue de la Clef the washerwomen and the tanners loudly cheered “the General.” No one suspected—not even himself—that this buffoon had just accomplished the most formidable revolution, and had given liberty a blow “which would make France weep for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “It may be as well to recall the circumstances under which the nomination of Hanriot to the command of the army of Paris was effected. This

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A month later, Hanriot received his brevet as General of Brigade, signed by the Minister of War. As the document is curious, we give an exact reproduction of it :—

| DETAILS OF SERVICES.               | CAMPAIGNS, ACTIONS, WOUNDS. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| For Citizen <i>Hanriot</i><br>born |                             |

Nothing more. Two months later—September 19th—Hanriot was named General of Division. His new brevet is not more explicit ; but under the column DETAILS OF SERVICES we find “General of Brigade since July 3rd.”<sup>1</sup> This parchment also conferred upon him, it would appear from the documents preserved in the Archives of the War Office, not only the command of all the Paris guards, but also that of the 17th Military Division. Hanriot therefore had a large army at his disposal—a hundred and thirty thousand men perhaps—and this pickthank of the Rue de la Clef was probably the most powerful personage in France.

Fortunately he was not aware of it, and his sudden elevation does not seem to have turned his head. He

man, who was first a servant and had been dismissed for misconduct, then a soldier in the troops sent to the colonies, then a clerk at the city gates, had made some partisans by his speeches against Lafayette, under whom he had served in America. On August 10th, he cast aspersions on the commander of the Jardin des Plantes section—the honest citizen Lafont, sen. His calumnies having resulted in the dismissal of Lafont, he got himself named commander by the *sans-culottes*—who then first assumed that distinguished title. On May 31st, the factions appointed him General, only for the purpose of striking a sacrilegious blow at the national representatives. A man with more solid titles was afterwards needed, and Raffet became his rival. We know what then happened in the sections, amongst the Jacobins, and at the Commune ; how he went to the meetings ; how he drew up lists proscribing those who had the courage to vote for his rival, and whom he called ‘Rafetiens’ ; and how the Commune cancelled every election, although quite valid, until Hanriot had been appointed. But it is not generally known that Raffet was obliged to fly, and that a reward of 100,000 livres was offered for his head. Raffet was arrested at Châlons and imprisoned, but was fortunate enough to escape, under the assumed name of Nicolas. After this nomination, which was so fatal to Hanriot, a sum of 600,000 livres was taken from the secret service fund, and of this 100,000 livres was paid to Hanriot, and the rest distributed.”—Courtois, Report, p. 61.

<sup>1</sup> These two documents, on parchment, are in the *National Archives*, AF<sup>II</sup>, 368<sup>47</sup>.

lodged at the Hôtel de Ville in an apartment which overlooked the Rue du Martroi, behind the Arcade Saint-Jean, and lived there like a Bohemian, without any thought of settling down regularly. His only luxuries consisted of a clock on a marble pedestal, and three plaster busts representing J. J. Rousseau, Brutus, and Marat. His wardrobe was modest—he possessed nothing but indispensable underwear, a General's coat, with the collar embroidered with gold lace, two pairs of yellow Kerseymere trousers, and “a moiré and silver jacket”—presumably a relic of the days when he kept a dram-shop. He had three pairs of top-boots, and a number of plates and dishes of brown earthenware, or white, with red flowers—the utensils of a patriot and a Spartan. In the way of amusement, the only article was a hunting-horn

From the Hôtel de Ville he dated the “orders of the day” to the troops—orders which were carefully copied on a register now preserved in the National Archives. They are singularly well adapted to suit the intellect of the persons to whom they were addressed. They exhale an odour of fustian and mock-heroic sentimentality, which must have drawn tears from, and sent a thrill of enthusiasm through, the market-porters of the Halles and the tanners of the Rue Copeau. Hanriot recommends his men to have “the imposing pride of republicans.” “My brothers-in-arms,” he writes, “be always sublime and watchful.” He warns them against “the gold of the English Minister and company, which is spread abroad in profusion.” He reminds them that “a police force is not made with pikes and bayonets, but with judgment and philosophy, which ought to keep a watchful eye on society.” He is the least military of all Generals—“never talk about armed force; it savours too much of despotism. I know that it is necessary, but the number ought to be very small.” His opinions concerning society are not, however, very liberal. “My comrades! Keep on arresting! Those who do not like it may go and live wherever they please.” His avowed object is to spare his brothers-in-arms all possible fatigue and drudgery.

“The service is so well executed that I have already

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suppressed three posts . . . by an active surveillance, I shall succeed in lightening the duties of my brothers-in-arms. Let us well understand each other, let us all work together; public affairs will go on smoothly, and our enemies will be forced to recognise us as what we really are. Let them amass immense wealth, let them build houses and palaces—that matters little to us! We republicans need no shelter but a hut, and no riches except good morals, virtues, and love of our country.”

Those to whom these rewards appear rather chimerical will obtain something else, and thus everybody will be satisfied.

“I am very glad to inform my brothers-in-arms that all places are at the disposal of the Government; the present Government can appoint any man to any place. It seeks out virtuous men even in the garrets; it says to the poor and the *sans culottes*: ‘Come, occupy this place, the country calls you; serve her and love her; she is the mother of you all.’”

Some of these proclamations evince a simplicity which verges on the sublime.

“My brothers-in-arms complain that they have not all got guns. That is not my fault. I should like to see them all armed the same; *but the pike is an excellent weapon against an unarmed man.*”

And this other:

“Yesterday evening a fire broke out at the Grands Augustins. The citizens, the magistrates, the armed force were all on the spot at once. All worked; the fire was extinguished in a very short time. Under the old *régime*, the fire would have lasted several days; under the *régime* of free men it did not last more than an hour. What a difference!”

Hanriot understood his audience;<sup>1</sup> in his eloquence there

<sup>1</sup> Fayot, in the *Dictionnaire de la Conversation*, gives a fair appreciation of Hanriot's character. “No revolutionary officer has been more blamed by his enemies as well as by his friends. You will find, however, in the documents concerning those times, nothing to justify this fury. . . . His name suggests to the mind every sort of stupidity, and yet, under difficult circumstances, he gave proof of brains, coolness, and energy. His name is synonymous with rudeness and lack of intelligence, and yet his orders of the day, his proclamations, his letters, are full of gentle, just, straightforward sentiments and good advice, and their tone is frank and friendly. . . . He is a democratic functionary, an energetic officer who has risen



is something of the "patter" of former days, when he went about from fair to fair and sold hosiery to the peasants. And that is what pleased the working-classes of the faubourgs, to whom fine language was a dead letter, and who had never heard an orator so intelligible.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason he was adored by the "Sans Culottes"—and this is a good opportunity to remark that a very strange mistake is generally made as to the origin and meaning of this historic phrase. A *sans-culotte* was not, as might be imagined, a man indecently clad. The term was used in contradistinction to the fashionable people who wore knee-breeches and tightly-fitting stockings, whereas the nether limbs of the workmen were covered with cloth or fustian trousers which came down to the instep and hid the shoe. Previous to 1792 trousers were held in horror—they were the mark of the rude, uncultivated lower orders. In all the stories about the bands of "terrorists" who made their appearance throughout the country and frightened respectable people, we hear about the unkempt beards, the big swords, the red caps, *and the trousers*. The trousers caused as much fright as the beards and the sabres.

A *sans-culotte* was therefore a man with trousers, and Hanriot was perfectly aware of the fact, for his wardrobe comprised two pairs—one of striped nankeen and the other of red cloth. In spite of these concessions to public opinion he had his detractors. To some persons his mode of life seemed improper, and stank of aristocracy, although he was not at all proud, and frequently dined with a friend named Voison, who was a tiler.

The General was also reproached with having a private box at the Théâtre de la République, and another at the Opéra Comique—a box of six places on the first tier, which he had

from the lower orders. He may have been carried away by the excesses of the crises through which he passed, but I remain convinced that—like many others—he neither saw nor knew a great part of the evil which is imputed to him."

<sup>1</sup> There is a kind of rough eloquence about some of his sayings. The president of the Jacobins one day declared that Hanriot "had deserved well of his country." The General replied: "Wait till I am dead. Then you will put my carcase in some corner, and you will say, 'He deserved well of his country.'"—Aulard, *La société des Jacobins*, vol. v. p. 253.

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taken for a year, in Ventôse of the year II., for 2000 livres. His fancy for galloping through the streets at the head of a posse of beplumed aides-de-camp—Egron, Ulrick, Michaud, Séraillé and Deschamps—was also much criticised. For the General—although, to spare the feelings of his brothers-in-arms, he abstained from all show, and never ordered any military manœuvres—loved to ride through Paris on a horse which was not, we imagine, a thoroughbred. These excursions had earned him (on account of his devotion to the “Incorruptible”) the nickname of “Robespierre’s Ass”; and, besides, to ride on a horse at all was, in the eyes of the jealous foot-soldiers, an infringement of the laws of equality, and brought to the General warnings like the following document, which was found amongst his papers after his death:—

“As a good *sans-culotte*, I warn you that the rumours which circulate concerning you are generally believed. Public opinion begins to disparage you. So it may suffice to tell you what occurs in order that you may not be turned out of your place, like all those who have occupied places since July 14th, 1789. People dislike your aides-de-camp, with their epolets (*sic*) and their insolence, your new house, your way of speaking to everybody, the air of importance you give yourself when you go out with your followers; in fact you displease even those who have sworn to the Committee of Public Safety to protect you. I foresee that your days are coming to an end. Save your head if you can.

“LEGRAND, your former friend.”

Even the washer-women of the Rue du Battoir lost their liking for him, and, being ignorant of the art of dissembling, collectively addressed the following epistle to “their” Hanriot:—

“—— satellite of Robespierre, it suits well with your fine phrases to tell us to go without everything, like good republicans. Make us get used to do without food, and not to wash the linen that you wear, as well as all the —— deputies who want for nothing, and who call themselves republicans and *sans-culottes*. We may as well be hanged for a sheep as a

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lamb, and we say you worry us with your orders. We know what we have agreed on ; you will not always harass us with your catchpolls, for you may go and dance with all the Robespierres, and the ———s of his band, who make us kill our children and die of hunger.

“THE CITIZEN WASHERWOMEN OF THE FAUBOURG SAINT-MARCEAU.”<sup>1</sup>

The *brevet*, of which we have given a facsimile, was a perfect symbol of Hanriot's public life—it was an absolute blank ; it consisted of only two days, June 2nd, 1793, and the 9th of Thermidor of the Year II. It has been said that on June 2nd the General had taken too much wine ; and we are assured that on the 9th of Thermidor he was dead drunk. It would seem, however, that he was perfectly sober, and there is nothing to show that he was addicted to drink. Moreover, he was deeply in the confidence of Robespierre, who was not the kind of man to choose a drunkard for his familiar friend.<sup>2</sup> The survivors of the Duplay family preserved a tradition that, on the morning of the 9th of Thermidor, the adversaries of Robespierre had treacherously intoxicated Hanriot by mixing alcohol with his usual beverage. It is quite possible ; besides, on that day, all Paris was drunk and mad.

For a week past the air had been like fire ; the atmosphere was stifling ; the city, already overheated with fever, terror, and emotion, sweltered under a merciless sun. “Furniture and wood-work cracked, doors and windows warped ; in the garden the vegetables were cooked.” If we follow the history of the 9th—not in books, but in the still almost unexplored mass of documents in the Archives—we may well believe that

<sup>1</sup> The document is written in the familiar, or contemptuous, second person singular. Some of the expressions are too coarse to be translated.  
—TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> “Hanriot was not in the habit of drinking ; there is a tradition amongst persons who knew him that his intoxication on the 9th of Thermidor was due to something having been put in his drink by persons whose interest it was to prevent him from being able to act ; and when we consider what terror the remembrance of May 31st and June 2nd must have caused the conspirators, we are tempted to regard the tradition as true.”—*Dictionnaire encyclopédique de France*, by Ph. Le Bas, Member of the Institute. Philippe Le Bas was, as we know, the son of the *conventionnel* and of Elisabeth Duplay.

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Paris—already frantic, ebullient, and suffocated—had been suddenly struck with a fit of furious madness.

About ten in the morning—the time when the sitting of the Convention began—Hanriot going to lunch, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, with one of his relations—probably his brother-in-law, the turner, Lassus—met some gendarmes, whom he swore at and threatened with his sabre. He returned about two o'clock to his apartment in the Rue du Martroi. The ante-chamber was filled with *sans-culottes*, much excited by the events of the day. In the square were a picket of cavalry and the gunners—the famous gunners of June 2nd, protecting the headquarters of the Commune.

Whilst the General was speechifying in his *salon*, three men—Citizens Héron, Pillé, and Rigogne—bearers of an order from the Committee of General Safety, appeared on the scene. They were received with hootings. Héron, though jostled, pushed his way through the crowd, approached Hanriot, and informed him, as well as he could in the general uproar, that he had an order for his arrest. The General roared with fury, and called on his officers for help. “I order you to kill this scoundrel this very instant. To-day we ought to make a second 31st of May, and the three hundred scoundrels who sit in the Convention ought to be exterminated.” Then, “in the voice of a sultan,” and pointing to the messengers of the Committee, he roared, “Stab them! Stab them all! all! Let me be rid of them this moment!”<sup>1</sup>

The aides-de-camp drew their swords, and a terrible fight began. Hanriot, however, changed his mind; he preferred to send Héron and his satellites to the guillotine, and they were dragged away. Then the General staggered downstairs, his face flushed, and with no hat on his head, hoisted himself into the saddle, and dashed off at a gallop down the street, far ahead of his escort. At five o'clock, he was haranguing the mob<sup>2</sup> in the square of the Palais Egalité. He was alone,

<sup>1</sup> Report to the Committee of General Safety by Citizen Héron, charged with the arrest of Hanriot, General of the National Guard of Paris.—*National Library*, Lb<sup>2</sup>, 1182.

<sup>2</sup> “He stopped the cabs and made a speech to the paviors. I met him there he rode at a gallop to the Place de la Barrière des Sergents; from there he rode to harangue the crowd.”—*Courtois' Report*.



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(From a sketch in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris)



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speaking, shouting, gesticulating. A citizen caught his horse by the bridle, and dragged him to the Committee of General Safety, where he was arrested, pinioned, and tied to a chair. How he was delivered by Coffinhal, in the teeth of the Convention—which seems to have been hypnotised—is a fact that is unexplained and inexplicable—like many other things that occurred on that day of mad fury.

Hanriot, being again free, jumped on an artilleryman's horse, and rode to the Luxembourg, crying, "Down with the gendarmes!" Then he was seen at the Palais de Justice, at the head of a squadron of cavalry, shouting an order to every detachment he met to "rip up the gendarmes." Not until ten o'clock did he reappear on the Place de Grève. The "Maison Commune" was still lighted up; he mounted to the room of the General Council and was cheered; he came down and again set off galloping through the terrified streets, followed by a gendarme and a municipal officer. He raved, he shook a pistol, and he cried, "Kill! Kill!" varied by the old refrain of "Rip up the gendarmes!" A citizen of the Lombards section, named Roger, tried to arrest him, but received a kick that laid him prostrate. And so the madness continued until the storm, which had been threatening all day, burst. The air was cooled, rain fell, the moral tension was relieved, and the National Guard regained its quarters. Who can tell what influence those drops of water had on the history of the world!

Coffinhal—furious at finding that the game was lost—seized Hanriot by the collar, and threw him out of a third-floor window in the Hôtel de Ville into a small courtyard, where he was found the next day, at one o'clock in the afternoon—bruised, bleeding, and stupefied—by two gendarmes named Charpentier and Laporte.<sup>1</sup>

At six in the evening, he left the Conciergerie for the guillotine. He was put in the second tumbril—the honour of the first being reserved for Robespierre and Dumas. Hanriot was leaning against the side of the cart; next to him was Robespierre the younger. The General was a hideous

<sup>1</sup> Courtois' Report.

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spectacle—there was a gash on his forehead, his right eye was hanging on his cheek, his face was covered with blood,<sup>1</sup> his shirt and clothes imbued with the filth of the sewer in which he had passed the night, and he was still drunk. A hundred thousand persons yelled with joy when they saw his head fall.<sup>2</sup> When Robespierre was decapitated, a woman's voice broke the momentary silence which followed by crying, "*Bis.*"

Barras, who succeeded Hanriot in the command of the Paris army, used maliciously to declare that when, at the time of the Restoration, the Government sought for the remains of Louis XVI. in the common grave of the Madeleine cemetery, in order to remove them to Saint-Denis, the disinterment was so clumsily managed that search was made in the exact spot where the bodies of Robespierre and the other victims of Thermidor had been thrown. And thus it happened—he affirmed—that Hanriot, the ex-servant, the mountebank of suburban fairs, the idol of the *sans-culottes*, and "Robespierre's ass," rests—unexpected epilogue to his amazing history—in the vault of the Kings of France, which had been specially restored by the piety of the Bourbons on purpose to receive him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Hanriot had a scar on his face and was wounded in the arm, in defending himself against the gendarmes charged to arrest him."—*Courrier Républicain*, 12th of Thermidor, second year.

<sup>2</sup> "Hanriot—drunk as usual—was by the side of Robespierre the younger."—*Perlet's Journal*. "The heads of Robespierre, Hanriot, Dumas, and some others were shown to the people."—*Courrier Républicain*, quoted by Aulard.

<sup>3</sup> We may as well mention another tradition, which, however, we should dismiss as absurdly improbable, were it not that some respectable persons, whose good faith cannot be doubted, have given credence to it. Hanriot, it is said, did not die on the 10th of Thermidor in the Year II. Some staunch friends saved him from the guillotine! He survived till 1822, when he was killed in a street accident in the centre of Paris. His tomb stood for many years in a cemetery in the faubourg of ——. If we cannot, *a priori*, controvert this astounding statement, on account of the indisputable authority of the persons who have given currency to it, we find it, nevertheless, impossible to admit—in the absence of all documentary and material proof—that a man so well known to all Paris, and whose severed head the executioner showed to the people, could have effected an escape, and lived so many years unrecognised.



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THIS idyllic name—in English, the Shepherd's Crook—is that of an inn standing on the old road which leads from Valenciennes into Belgium. La Houlette is the first house you meet after crossing the frontier, and the cramp-irons on its whitewashed façade bear the date 1782. The house was, therefore, Austrian when it was originally built. Quite near, at the side of the ancient highway, now but a poor country road, there stands, buried in the grass, a lichen-coloured boundary post, upon one side of which can still be distinguished the three large *fleurs de lys* of France, whilst upon the other is visible the spread eagle of the Holy Empire. The armies that fought at Jeninapes, Fleurus, and Waterloo passed this boundary post, which, since the days of Louis XV., has marked the borders of France. It has outlasted treaties, withstood the dismemberments of Europe, and when French territory stretched to the mouths of the Elbe, it obstinately, philosophically remained where it is, half-hidden in the grass. In 1815 it was reinstated in its dignity as a boundary mark—a dignity which it still retains. In short, its stubbornness has outlasted all those conquerors' dreams, in the realisation of which so many men have been uselessly slaughtered.

At the time of the Revolution, La Houlette, owing to its position, was the first safe shelter for *émigrés* rejoining the army of the Princes by way of Mons. There, only, were they out of danger. It was at the "Shepherd's Crook" that they cast aside the tri-coloured cockade they had worn whilst travelling through France, in order to divert suspicion, and which they removed from their hats as soon as they had crossed the frontier. "Gentlemen," was the traditional

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phrase which postillions wishing for a good tip addressed to well-accoutred travellers, "you can throw away your cockades, for we are now on Imperial territory."

Now it happened that, in consequence of certain events, it was not known during an interval of three years to what nation the district between Landrecies and Mons belonged. In November 1792 the Republic annexed Hainaut. But six months later the Austrians invaded the district, and the localities, after having been called communes, were rechristened parishes. This was the state of affairs during the whole of the summer of 1793. During the winter following the victory of Wattignies, the French army took up its quarters between Valenciennes and Maubeuge, whilst the enemy was at Charleroi and Mons, so that the district in question being between the two camps was of undecided nationality—the stake of future battles. In June there was another French invasion, this time durable, although it was not until the beginning of 1785 that a semblance of an Administration was instituted. Up to then anarchy had reigned. There had been neither police, nor magistrates, nor employees, nor gendarmerie, nor road-men, nor keepers, nor tribunals, nor jailers. Nobody cared to assume a compromising responsibility on a territory the eventual owner of which was unknown. The district therefore was without government, but not without a master, for it possessed a tyrant, named Moneuse.

Moneuse was an over-bold brigand who perceived that this interregnum would be a golden age for brigandage, and who proceeded to levy, on his own account, the taxes which neither the King of France nor the Emperor could any longer collect. In this corner of the Nord, the time of Moneuse is a historic date, like the invasion of Marlborough, or the occupation by the allied armies.

If fame were justly awarded, Antoine Moneuse would be as celebrated as Cartouche or Mandrin. He was born in 1768, the son of a well-to-do peasant of Marly, a suburb of Valenciennes, in a mill situated where a gibbet formerly stood; so his life—which was to end on the scaffold—began under the gallows. About 1776, the Moneuse family left Marly, and

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settled at Saint-Waast-la-Vallée, the last village of France, on the frontiers of the Netherlands, and where they had "some property." There Moneuse grew up, and went to school every day at Bavai, the neighbouring town. One morning—it was June 22nd, 1779—he was going to school as usual, with his satchel in his hand, when, at a spot called "the Two Roads," he saw a corpse lying at the edge of a plot of wheat. Approaching it, he recognised the body of his father, whose head had been split by a sabre-cut. The burial took place two days later. Madame Moneuse, a robust and repulsive matron, who was called, on account of her exuberant figure, "the fat woman of Saint-Waast," refused to identify the body, in order to avoid paying the funeral expenses.

At thirteen, young Moneuse was "a cunning rascal," already feared by his neighbours; two years later he was deemed "a gadabout and thief"; at sixteen, he knocked out a butcher-boy's eye in a fight; at eighteen, he was arrested for having robbed a pedlar's cart on the Avesnes road. Finally, at the beginning of 1789, he joined a band of robbers and murderers, the chief of which was an (apparently) respectable merchant of Lille, named Salembier, much esteemed in his own city, where everybody considered him an honourable man.

At that period there was in many provinces of France an epidemic of brigandage, the very mysterious history of which has never been written. But the traditions, which can be picked up here and there, are strange and terrible. For instance, we find this Salembier, a respected and important citizen, transforming himself, according to circumstances, into an Englishman, a beggar, a gendarme, or an Austrian officer, and going about the country "studying" solitary farms.

Some nights—accompanied by his men with blackened faces, pistol in hand, and knife between teeth—he scales the walls, breaks open the doors, gags the women, "roasts" the men, burns the barns, makes off with the money, and at dawn is found sitting, calmly and peacefully, in his counting-house. In this manner he scoured all the region of the Nord from Amiens to Tournay. In Artois,

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his "head clerk" was a certain Saint-Amand, a released convict, who had retired from active life with the banditti and become a large farmer in the environs of Aire. He was the oracle of the peasants; arbitrated between them in disputes, advised them in business matters, recommended investments, and thus was able to give Salembier valuable information.

Under such masters, Moneuse made rapid progress. His first exploit was the pillage of Pembrouk Farm, two leagues from Lille; the people, men and women, were killed, the buildings burned. The spoil, it was said, was more than 120,000 francs. Having made this lucky hit, Moneuse returned home to Saint-Waast—his house is still standing, white, surrounded by hedges, at the bottom of an orchard, quite a pastoral nest—and began to work on his own account. There are some indications that he visited Paris in 1792, at the time of the September massacres.<sup>1</sup> Had he been sent for? His name is cited amongst the assassins of Madame de Lamballe, at the prison of La Force. He came back well provided with money, and displayed a boldness that was equivalent to a certainty of being unpunished. In that district—where no one knew to whom to complain, or what protection to invoke—there did not pass a single month, from December 1792 to July 1795, without some farm being sacked or some traveller's throat cut.

The peasants of Hainaut were terror-stricken; at nightfall they barricaded themselves in their houses. But Moneuse laughed at barricades—a beam, suspended on a couple of straps, would break open the most solid door in three blows.

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, a Momeuse or Monneuse was one of the murderers at the prison of La Force. Was it the same man? Moneuse had three brothers, one of whom, Pierre François, who died in 1850, did not have a very good reputation; another brother, Hippolyte, died in 1840; the third, Martin Joseph, died in 1863. Were there others of the name besides these? A book in two volumes, published at Marseilles in 1847, *Celebrated Episodes of the Revolution in the Provinces*, contains a long chapter on the "Chaufeurs du Nord," in which is related the history of a certain Moneuse who operated in Maine-et-Loire. There is even a portrait of this personage given, but there is reason to believe that portrait and narrative are alike fictitious. Under the title of *Les Chauffeurs du Nord*, there appeared, in 1815, a novel in five volumes, signed by Vidocq, in which Saint-Amand and Salembier are the heroes. The book is unreadable, and I have never had the courage to ascertain if Moneuse plays a part in it.

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And the terrible bandit appeared, implacable, emotionless, soft-spoken, laconically demanding the hidden hoard, and deaf to all denials. The voice in which he told his men to "Bring wood!" made the farmers howl with fear, for they knew that they would be bound, laid upon two overturned chairs, and their naked feet thrust into the fire. Moneuse never inflicted torture himself; he calmly stood by with his arms crossed, as though he were quite unconcerned, and his victims were aware that no supplications would move that callous heart to pity.

He was gallant, after a fashion, and fond of women, but not one of his mistresses, and he had many, knew his real name. He did not, however, conceal himself, but attended village *fêtes*, danced with the girls, and stood treat at the tavern. He amused people with card-tricks and conjuring, was a ventriloquist, and could imitate the cries of all kinds of birds by means of a strip of leek placed under his tongue. People were so frightened of him that they laughed at his jokes, to curry favour with him. Though he acknowledged neither God nor devil, he was superstitious; he would undertake no expedition on a Friday that fell on the 13th of the month; he would not pass by a cemetery after dark, and he always carried in his pocket a little leaden bead, stamped with some religious effigy, which he called his "cabala," and to which he attributed marvellous powers. His followers called him "Mendeck" (the old man); they were very numerous, but did not know one another, as they never saw each other except when they were masked, or their faces covered with soot. Amongst his principal lieutenants are mentioned Louis Mortier, *alias* "Panchy," of the village of Leuze; Trognon, of la Flamengrie; Michet, *alias* Badin, of Fayt-le-Franc; his brother Michet, known as "Thawed;" Nicolas Gérin, called the "Cayau" (flint-stone); François, known as "the Fly," of Roisin. They were all well-to-do men, having a hearth and home, and living—at least apparently—by their labour, or on their property.

Roisin, now a Belgium town of 2,000 inhabitants, numbered only 600 at that time, and was one of the places where the gang met. The inn of La Houlette is in the parish, about

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half a league from the town. It occupies the centre of a desolate plain with nothing picturesque about it, in which fields of beetroot alternate with ploughed lands. The house, which is very lonely, now serves as a refuge for smugglers, who run tobacco or coffee across the frontier. At the time of the Revolution, the frequent advent of *émigrés* gave it some importance; secret meetings were often held there, the spot being far from all indiscreet listeners. A report, dated 1793, states that "La Houlette contains fourteen beds, and there is room for ten horses in the stables."<sup>1</sup> Another note, dated the following year, reports that "La Houlette receives many foreigners, on account of its position on the frontier of the country, and serves as a refuge for *ci-devants* and notorious enemies of the Republic. It would therefore be advisable in the interests of government and public security, to have this suspected house watched, on account of conspiracies and Royalist troubles." Watched? By whom? Moneuse had been, for the last two years, the only authority in the district.

La Houlette was, at that time, inhabited by a farmer and inn-keeper, Jean Philippe Couëz, who lived there with his wife, *née* Joséphine Boulvin, and six children, the eldest of whom was twenty-two, and the youngest still in swaddling-clothes. Couëz, without being rich, had some property; thanks to the events of the times, his establishment prospered. He had a boarder, Dr. Hubert Moreau, a *bon vivant* in spite of his sixty-four years, and known to all the district for his good humour.

From its isolation, its situation, and its class of customers, La Houlette was fated to have adventures. The drama which occurred there in the autumn of 1795 has remained an inexplicable enigma. A Belgian scholar, M. van den Busch, formerly archivist of Bruges, who published, some twenty years ago, in a local journal, valuable information regarding the "Brigands of Hainaut," did not succeed in solving the mystery.<sup>2</sup> Was the drama nothing but a more than usually

<sup>1</sup> Report of Brigadier Albert Nigard, quoted by M. van den Busch.

<sup>2</sup> The very interesting notes collected by M. van den Busch, in the course of a laborious career, were published for the first time in the *Frontière du Hainaut*, about twenty years ago. In spite of the romantic

horrible police case; or was it connected with important political events? We do not know; we can only give a detailed account of the principal incidents.

On August 7th, 1795, two unknown persons arrived at an hôtel situated near the Quesnoy gate, in Valenciennes. They travelled in a good post-chaise, accompanied by a servant. Nothing showed them to be fugitives, and their passports were in order; nevertheless, it was known that they were noblemen, and that they came from Auvergne—"from Chaudesaigues in the Cantal," it was said.

They stayed at Valenciennes for some days, as though hesitating as to whether they should pass into the Netherlands. They finally made up their minds, and gained the frontier through Onnaing, Quarouble, and Marchipont, a small town out of France, where they hired a guide to take them to a neighbouring *château*, the name of which is not stated. On his return to Marchipont, this guide stated that at a place where the road passes between two high banks several shots were fired at the carriage. The servant cried, "Monsieur le duc, we are lost!" One of the travellers replied, "Forward! full speed! and let it be as God pleases!"

About two o'clock in the morning they arrived, without any further misadventure, at the *château*. The guide received two louis for his services, with a recommendation "to keep silent as to the incidents of the journey,"—which explains his hurry to narrate them. A rumour spread—one does not know why—at Marchipont, that the travellers "were members of the royal family of France, or, at least, princes of very high lineage," and, curious to say, that tradition still exists, and has become ineradicable.

Several times during September and October these noble strangers appeared at La Houlette. Being desirous of "keeping means of rapid communication with France," they hired two rooms there—the inn, as we know, contained several—one of which was large "with a bed arranged in

form which the writer has thought fit to adopt, he has cited textually a good number of authentic law-documents and statements collected from the archives of Mons and the neighbouring towns.

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a rich manner," as though some guest of consequence were expected. They announced their visit for November 22nd, and Couëz, the inn-keeper, prepared their rooms. But, whether they had some presentiment of danger, or some accident changed their plans, they contented themselves with sending their servant to give notice that they were not coming.

The man arrived at La Houlette in the evening. As it was Saint Cecilia's day, two violinists, returning from Bry on their way to Roisin, stopped to give a little concert. The Couëz family, Dr. Moreau, and the foreign servant amused themselves and supped together until half-past ten, at which hour the violinists left. On their way home, about a quarter of a league from the inn, they met a party of ten men, dressed like soldiers, carrying sabres, and marching rapidly towards La Houlette. The night was clear, and the musicians could see the men clearly. The violinists said "good night," and the men returned the salutation.

As soon as the fiddlers had left the house, Mme. Couëz and the children went to bed. Couëz conducted the foreign servant to a room on the first floor, then he returned to the *salle*, and whilst clearing away the plates and dishes, and talking to Dr. Moreau, there came a loud knocking at the door. After some hesitation, Couëz opened the door, and recognised François, otherwise known as "the Fly,"—one of Moneuse's gang.<sup>1</sup>

The "Fly" entered the room with a pitiful air—his wife was ill at Roisin, and he had come to fetch the doctor. Moreau refused to go with him, and pushed him towards the door. From his room the foreign servant heard "the Fly" enter, and the quarrel which followed. Looking out of the window, he saw ranged along the wall of the house, "masked soldiers hiding themselves." "They are gendarmes," he thought, and as, no doubt, his conscience was not quite easy, and he knew that he was concerned in a dangerous intrigue, in an instant he had reached the garret, opened

<sup>1</sup> The incidents of the drama are related from the official account, written the day after the crime, and discovered by M. van den Busch. The document is signed by Wattiaux, National agent; Marlier, mayor; J. B. Durosoy and P. J. Despinoy, officers.



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the skylight, climbed out on to the roof, and closed the window behind him.

Crouched on the slanting roof, hidden by the parapet, he heard the men enter the house. One of them asked in a commanding voice, "Where are the *émigrés*?" Couëz uttered a cry: "Help! It is Moneuse," and then followed a loud commotion. Evidently the house was being searched from attic to basement. This tumult lasted twenty minutes—not more, for it was not eleven o'clock when the band withdrew. A voice gave the order, "Now, forwards," and peeping over the parapet, the servant saw the man who appeared to be the leader, bestride his horse and disappear at a gallop in the direction of Roisin, whilst his companions went towards Flamengrie and Eth.

The servant waited an hour. All was quiet in the inn, but, not being willing to enter it again, he unwound a long Spanish scarf, which he wore round his waist, attached one end firmly to the parapet, slipped down to the ground, and hid himself, for the rest of the night, in a copse near the Calotin Inn, by the side of the Saint-Waast Road. It was afterwards discovered that, in the course of the morning, he rejoined his masters, who had remained at Montignies-sur-Roc, and that he left with them for Germany the same day.

About half past six on the morning of November 23rd<sup>1</sup> Antoine Libert, tailor, of Eth, passed by La Houlette, and wanted a drink. The shutters of the inn were closed; the door stood ajar. He entered—there was no light; he called—and there was a dead silence. Advancing a few steps into the room, and trying to grope his way to the door of Couëz's room, he stumbled against "something that he thought was a sack." He was frightened and went out again. He stood outside, puzzled and anxious. The plain was deserted, and looked lonely in the faint, grey

<sup>1</sup> It appears to be proved that at five o'clock in the morning an unknown person, who could not afterwards be found, passed through the village of Autreppe, and said to a waggoner: "I think something has happened at La Houlette. I saw gendarmes at the door." To which the waggoner replied, "There are often gendarmes there." But at five o'clock no gendarmes could have been seen, and the crime was first discovered by Antoine Libert, at half-past six.

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light of a winter dawn ; a dog, tied up behind the house, howled lamentably. Libert walked round the inn, and saw a long band of blue stuff hanging from the roof ; the wall by the side of this scarf was scratched and bore the marks of a heel—the “round heel” of a fashionable shoe “that was made a long way from here.”

Libert went back to the front of the house and knocked at the shutters ; but no one answered. He decided to enter the *salle* again ; passed the door, and now saw that what he had taken for “a sack” was a dead body. Half wild with fright, he dashed across the fields to Roisin, and gave the alarm.

The *juge de paix*, the national agent, the municipal officers quickly gathered together ; half the population of the town, anxious and excited, accompanied them. When they arrived at La Houlette the blue scarf described by Libert had disappeared ; some one had even tried to prevent the heel-marks from being identified, by rubbing ashes over the scratches on the wall.

The national agent, Wattiaux, posted sentries at the door of the inn, forbade anyone to open the shutters, and entered. The municipal officers, Marlier, Durosoy, and Despinoy followed him. The official account of their search, which was found by M. van den Busch, abounds in repulsive details, from which it will suffice to extract the main facts.

In the first room, which served as tap-room and kitchen, three bodies were lying—those of Dr. Moreau, Mme. Couëz—clad only in a serge petticoat and a short cape—and Joséphine Couëz—thirteen years and a half. She was in her chemise, and had been hacked to death with sabres ; the head was severed from the body. All the drawers were emptied, and the chests broken open.

The gruesome work of investigation was carried on by the glimmer of candles, and the grey daylight that filtered in through the open door and the lozenge-shaped holes in the shutters. Outside the crowd collected, and discussed the event in awe-struck whispers. All eyes were riveted on the cursed house, standing, white and calm, with its closed shutters. The news as to what had been found there spread quickly over the plain, and when the number of victims was

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known, the imprecations of the crowd rose in a loud shout of:

“Moneuse! Moneuse!”

Two doctors arrived—François Valleran, surgeon, of Sebourque, and Dr. Crapez, of Wagnies. They went into the house—the investigation continued. All the ground floor was “covered with blood.” In the room next to the kitchen, on the right, the body of Couëz was found—dressed in a cloth coat and velvet breeches. His head was smashed in; the butt of a gun, which had been broken over his skull, was lying in another part of the room. In a small room adjoining lay the body of one of Couëz’s daughters, holding in her arms her baby sister. Both were dead—pierced with many stabs from sword or dagger. Doubled up in a corner was the corpse of Revelde Couëz—twelve years and a half—covered with a shirt and vest, which had evidently been put on in the hurry to fly. On the staircase was Jean Philippe Couëz, the eldest son—twenty-two years. He had been struck down whilst running upstairs, as though he went to give the alarm to someone concealed on the first floor. In an upper room was a ninth corpse, that of Désiré Couëz; his throat had been cut whilst he was in bed.

As the lugubrious investigation continued, the crowd of peasants outside increased. People arrived in shoals. They came from Autreppe, Saint-Waast, Montignies, and places still more remote. The house remained closed, but it was known that the doctors were busy making the *post-mortem* examinations. The usually-deserted plain was now thronged by a huge crowd, from which rose threatening cries of “Moneuse! Moneuse!” Suddenly there was silence, the silence of fear, more impressive than the surging of abruptly checked wrath. It was caused by the appearance of Moneuse—the man who was unanimously believed to be the assassin. Like the others, he had come to have a look at the scene of the massacre. He was on horseback—disdainful, icy, terrible, of tall stature, with a vulture face, black hair and eyebrows, a scar across his left cheek, on his head a fox-skin cap, ornamented with a lock of grey wool bristling in the wind; a large, red cravat; and a leather belt which held a brace of pistols and a Catalan

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knife. Haughtily disregarding of the general constraint, he rode up to the inn, put a few questions, learned what he wished to know, turned his bridle, and rode away.

But public indignation was too strong for even the cold-blooded audacity of the bandit. The same evening a search was made at his mother's house at Saint-Waast. She declared



MONEUSL.

(From a pen and ink sketch made by the clerk to Judge Harmegnies during the prisoner's examination at Mons. In the possession of M. Debovo d'Elouges.)

she had not seen her son for the last fortnight. A few days later—on the 27th—the brigand allowed himself to be arrested, without resistance, at the house of his friend, Trognon, at La Flamengrie. The astonishing thing is that there were gendarmes found to arrest him; but it was more difficult still to find a magistrate who would consent to look into the case. The *juge de paix* at Quesnoy, before whom

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Moneuse was brought, sent him to his colleague at Bavai, who sent him to the judge at Dour, who referred the case to the magistrates at Mons. Moneuse disdained to exculpate himself and was content to plead an *alibi*—he had passed the night of the crime at the house of Widow Gilmant, at Roisin. She tremblingly declared that she saw him, at ten o'clock, on the night of the 22nd, stretch himself, fully dressed, on a mattress, and that she found him there at five in the morning of the 23rd, “sleeping quietly, and not having taken off either his coat or his boots.” No one would consent to give evidence against the accused; no one dared to recall his former crimes, though they were well-proved, notorious, and undeniable. Moreover—and this is where the mystery is most manifest—no evidence was sought. From the beginning of the inquiry, the magistrates understood “that the crime of La Houlette, though apparently committed for the purpose of robbery, was really planned for some other motive, long prepared, and—who knows?—perhaps highly rewarded.” The charges (which soon dropped) were opposed by “a series of intrigues, and underhand manœuvres which paralysed the action of justice.” Harmegnies, the judge at Dour, openly said, “No one will ever dream of looking in the right place for the really guilty parties; this criminal case is like Penelope’s web.” Moneuse, who had never entertained any doubts as to the result, was set at liberty.

Nor have we learned anything concerning the tragedy since then. Who were the unknown travellers—the *émigrés* for whom the plot was certainly laid? By whom were the assassins incited? In what interest, or for whose profit, did they act? Who promised them impunity? These questions remain unanswered. But it is not for want of being put; they have been a brain-puzzle to the whole country-side for the last fifty years. At the time of the Restoration, when Mons ceased to be French territory, a manuscript, entitled “The Truth concerning the La Houlette massacre,” circulated throughout the district, and was supposed to be written, or inspired by, the servant who, from the roof of the inn, had seen the arrival of the brigands. He left—as has already been said—the same day for Germany with his

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mysterious masters, and re-appeared, twenty years later, to learn, for the first time, that nine persons had perished in the house whilst he lay concealed in the gutter. His story did not clear away the mystery, and people continued to discuss the drama.

It is still talked about, and a visit to the ill-omened inn is recommended to all tourists who pass through Bavai or Roisin. A hundred years have wrought no change in its appearance. After having long remained unoccupied, it at last found a purchaser. Some man at last dared push open the door, wash away the blood-stains, reside there, and sleep comfortably. La Houlette has not, even now, a very good reputation. Towards evening, the usual customers—all smugglers—meet there and drink gin whilst awaiting their opportunity to cross the frontier; in the daytime it is closed, silent and disreputable looking. On the extreme frontier solitary houses have often a very suspicious appearance.

Moneuse quietly resumed his exploits:—a short summary of them would furnish matter for a whole volume—but the last “affair” that he undertook, the affair of Ville-le-Pommereul, deserves to be mentioned at some length. It has remained celebrated throughout all the district, and is still often alluded to, though with no great eagerness and even some fear. Many people still prefer “to talk about something else.”

The *château* of Ville-le-Pommereul, situated on the Belgium frontier, between Mons and Condé, was a big, old, tumble-down, solitary house, that looked melancholy in the daytime and lugubrious by night. Four large towers formed a parallelogram, surrounded by a moat, and joined by high, cracked walls. A gloomy archway and a thick oak door gave access to the interior of the courtyard. Ville-le-Pommereul had formerly been the residence of a Prince de Ligne, nicknamed “the Great Devil,” and partly owing to the solitude of the place, and still more to this not very reassuring nickname, the *château* had been deserted by its noble proprietor, and, little by little, had fallen into ruins.

After Belgium had been conquered by the French, and the country portioned into divisions for administrative purposes,

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a notary's office was established at Pommereul, and the new notary, Citizen Lehon, purchased the old *château*. A detached portion of the building was repaired and made habitable, and there—at the beginning of 1796—the notary established himself with his wife—*née* Marie Claire Bouchez—a young child still in the cradle, a servant-girl, and a dog that answered to the name of “Picard.”

On the night of November 9th, 1796, in snowy weather, Notary Lehon and his wife were sitting by the side of the fire, in one of the rooms of their old, feudal abode; the child was asleep in one of the adjoining rooms, the servant-girl was sewing in the kitchen, when Picard, fastened up in the courtyard, began to growl, and tug furiously at his chain.

Mme. Lehon was afraid; in those days, people were afraid of everything—the slamming of a door, the breaking of a dead branch, the barking of a dog, or the shout of a foot-passenger on the high road. The notary, though somewhat nervous himself, took down from the wall his gun, loaded with two balls, unchained the furious dog, and went round the courtyard, and the dismantled walls of the *château*. The ground was covered with snow; far away, the village dogs replied to each other like watchful sentinels. After an hour's observation and waiting, Citizen Lehon re-entered the house quite reassured. His wife was still trembling, but he persuaded her to go to bed, promising her that he would watch for an hour or two, as an additional precaution. Besides, the door was locked, as it was every night, and the shutters firmly closed. Every house in that part of the country was transformed into a fortress, when night came, for fear of Moneuse and his band.

The notary tired of watching, and went to bed, when, about half-past eleven, Picard began to bark and growl. Lehon jumped out of bed and seized his gun, which lay within reach. His wife, distracted with fear, put on a petticoat, and followed her husband: the child continued to sleep. They descended to one of the lower rooms, and the notary gently opened the shutters; the night was now very dark, and he could not see three feet in front of him. The dog still barked furiously, and seemed to

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be fighting desperately. Suddenly, it uttered a distressing cry, followed by a plaintive groan. Lehon cocked his gun.

"Who goes there?" he cried, trying to make his voice steady.

At the same instant, ten hands seized him, and a voice from out of the darkness said:

"Throw down your weapon, or you are a dead man."

Bewildered, and almost fainting with fear, he let fall his gun. Rough hands pinioned him; a torch was lighted—then a second—then a third. A dozen men appeared to come out of the walls, and soon filled the room. Under their cloaks projected the handles of clubs, and the hilts of sabres; from their belts emerged the butts of pistols and the handles of daggers. Some of the men were masked; others had large stripes of black paint across their faces.

The notary's wrists were hurt by the tight cords with which he had been bound, and he complained.

"March!" was the reply. And he was violently pushed into the adjoining room—the drawing-room—where stood "the chief" and "his staff."

Lehon saw a man of about forty years of age, of tall stature, and strongly built. A thick moustache covered his mouth, and enormous black whiskers framed his face. His expression, however, was rather gentle. He wore a large three-cornered hat, edged with black feathers, a blue coat, trousers and scarf of blood red, and high boots. Like his companions, he had two pistols and a dagger in his belt; by his side hung a large sabre.

It was Moneuse. He leaned against the parlour table, with his arms crossed on his breast. At a sign from him all his men were silent; nothing could be heard but the sound of doors being broken open in the upper storeys of the house.

I must tell my reader that the account which follows, though it reads like a scene from a novel, is plain truth. I have followed, almost word for word, the story of the drama of which he was an unconscious witness, and which he had heard related a thousand times, as it was written by the son of Notary Lehon, the child who, awakened by the entrance of the bandits, was crying in his cradle.



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Moneuse asked : <sup>1</sup>

"Are you the notary?"

"I am."

"Do you know me?"

"No; I have never seen you."

"Who lives in your *château*?"

"I live alone, with my wife, my son, and a servant."

"You have no one hidden here?"

"No one."

"You will have to tell me the truth; remember that. Your life is at stake. Three days ago the village carrier came here bearing a sack of money. Dare you deny that?"

"It is true."

"The carrier left again, but the wallet remained here. Where have you put it?"

"I assure you this is the exact truth; as perhaps you know. The same carrier who brought me the money left for Mons yesterday morning about nine o'clock. He took with him the same wallet containing a sum of 6,000 francs received by me at Tournai on account of Citoyenne D—— of Mons. That is the whole truth."

"Your story is ingenious. Bring the woman here."

Mme. Lehon appeared, looking very pale. Seeing Moneuse, whom she recognised at once as the leader of the gang, she advanced resolutely towards him.

Moneuse continued in his calm voice :

"Answer me. Three days ago the sum of 6,000 francs was brought here. If you lie to me your husband will be stabbed before your eyes. Where is that money?"

Mme. Lehon fell on her knees.

"Sir, do not kill my husband or my child. I will tell you the whole truth. We have not got the money. It went away to Mons yesterday."

"They may be in league together," murmured Moneuse.

Mme. Lehon heard him.

"Mercy, sirs. We have not that money but we have a

<sup>1</sup> The dialogue is textually copied from the account, given many years after by Lehon, jun., as quoted by M. van den Busch.

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little, and some jewellery and other things. Take them, they are all yours—but spare our lives.”

She held out her ring to the brigand ; he hesitated, then stood up and said :

“Get up, and show us. We shall see then whether you deserve to live.”

She led Moneuse and his men to her husband’s office. She showed him a desk, which he opened. Inside the desk was a small casket inlaid with ivory and tortoiseshell in a chess-board pattern, and in this casket were a few pieces of gold. Moneuse took them.

“Is that all ?” he asked, in a disdainful tone.

Mme. Lehon led him into her bedroom and showed him a cupboard, which he opened. They took everything, even the linen.

“What we want is not here,” cried Moneuse. “Where is the 6,000 francs ?”

“I have nothing more,” groaned the unfortunate woman.

Moneuse saw the child hidden behind the curtains. He uncovered it, and placed the point of his dagger over the child’s heart.

“You have still some money,” he said to the mother. “Where is it ?”

Mme. Lehon tried to speak ; she stretched out her hands, uttered a groan, and fell to the ground in a dead faint. Moneuse pushed her on one side with his foot, and went back to the notary, who was still pinioned.

“Where is your money ?”

“It would be easier for me to give you my life.”

Moneuse turned towards his men, and said quietly :

“Wood !”

Lehon shuddered. He had expected death, and had summoned up all his courage to meet his fate, but tortures terrified him.

Wood was brought.

A large fire was lighted in the chimney ; the notary’s legs were tied to an overturned chair placed in front of the armchair to which he was bound. His feet were bared.

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Making an effort to overcome his terror, he appealed to Moneuse:

"I see that you are going to make me suffer atrocious pain. To avoid that, I would give you a million if I had it. I beg of you to spare me fearful and useless torture—I have given you all I possess."

"Tortures often wring avowals," replied Moneuse calmly. "Bring him closer to the fire; the weather is cold."

The arm-chair was pushed up to the chimney-piece. Lebon uttered a shriek as his feet entered the flames, and soon the muscles of his legs shrivelled and the flesh roasted.<sup>1</sup>

At dawn, Mme. Lehon was brought out of her swoon by the servant-girl, whom the brigands had locked in the cellar but who had managed to escape. The notary was found half dead, his mangled feet lying in the ashes of the extinguished fire. The house was sacked, and the brigands had disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

The drama of Ville-les-Pommereul made the name of Moneuse legendary throughout all the country between Mons and Valenciennes. The peasants, even in the heart of the villages, trembled whenever their dogs barked in an unusual manner; and pedlars kept up the general fright by selling ballads about the bandit's doings. The most popular of these effusions concluded with a prophecy that Moneuse would feel the just vengeance of heaven, and this prediction was at last verified, for Moneuse was arrested, in the environs of Quévy, February 12th, 1797, by a retired officer, Carbonelle,

<sup>1</sup> Notary Lehon was the principal agent in procuring the arrest and condemnation of Moneuse. The crime of Ville-les-Pommereul had excited indignation throughout all the countryside, and Lehon, though confined to his bed, and for a long time very ill, made every effort to have the bandits pursued and captured. It was at his suggestion that a body of volunteers was raised for the purpose of hunting down Moneuse. At any rate, it was his account of the drama of November 11th, a hundred times repeated and written in the words we have here given, which led to the condemnation of Moneuse. It was noticed as a curious fact, that the Criminal Court at Douai pronounced the verdict of death on November 11th, 1797, exactly a year to the day after the sacking of the notary's house.

<sup>2</sup> Me. Lehon, the notary, was in bed three years; he survived his wounds, however, and was able to totter about on two crutches. He died July 14th, 1824; his wife lived to the age of ninety-three, and died May 1st, 1865.

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who had bravely devoted himself to the task of ridding the district of this unseizable oppressor. He had that morning learned that Moneuse was at the house of his friend, Allard, at Quévy-le-Petit. The house was surrounded, but the brigand had already fled towards the wood of Tilleul. At three o'clock in the afternoon, two gendarmes coming from La Ronche saw him "leaning against a mound, his clothes in disorder, holding a horse-pistol in one hand and a Catalan knife in the other." One of the gendarmes—named Dourlens—walked boldly towards the bandit. In front of the mound was a little brook, and as Dourlens was in the act of jumping over this brook, Moneuse fired, but missed him. Dourlens cried, "Surrender, Moneuse!"

"I surrender," replied the *chauffeur*, and let fall his pistol. At that moment, Carbonelle and his men trotted up; they had already arrested the principal accomplices of Moneuse—Nicolas Gérin, Buisseret, Allard, and Cirier. They were all handcuffed, and packed into a covered cart, which conveyed them, by Asquillier, and Pâturages, to Mons, where the escort arrived about two in the morning. An ambush was laid in Allard's house, but the only person to present himself was a boy of fifteen, who, without entering the house, handed the man who opened the door "a knave of clubs, with two figures written at the back."

It was reckoned that since the crime of La Houlette, in fourteen months, Moneuse had besieged ten farmhouses, and "roasted" the inhabitants. He was tried at the Assizes at Mons.<sup>1</sup> The indictment against him contained fifteen charges—but La Houlette was not amongst them. Not a word was said about that.

Moneuse was condemned to death, but the judgment was quashed on account of some technical error, and the case referred to the Criminal Court of the Nord, sitting at Douai.

<sup>1</sup> We may record a singular trait of the judicial customs of the time. Moneuse, who was imprisoned at Mons, demanded to be tried before the Criminal Court of the Nord. On July 27th, 1797, "the director of the jury," not knowing whether he ought to accede to the prisoner's request, decided to settle the point by lot. Two slips of paper, one bearing the word "Mons" and the other "Douai," were placed in a hat, and one of the prisoners—Allard—"was requested to draw one of the papers; it was Mons that came out."

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It was necessary to take the evidence afresh there, but again no charge was brought concerning La Houlette. This assassination of nine persons was evidently regarded as a mere peccadillo.

Moneuse was again condemned to death, and mounted the scaffold on June 10th, 1798. Five or six days after his execution a report circulated at Roisin that before his death, "the condemned man had made numerous and important revelations concerning the La Houlette affair, and that he had named the instigators of the massacre." The authorities put a stop to these troublesome rumours. If Moneuse did say anything, his confession has slept for 110 years in the records of some court. But where?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We are informed that Moneuse's confession—presuming he made any—is not to be found in the records of the Court at Douai.

## MADAME BOUQUEY

A PORTRAIT of Madame Bouquey, the calmly courageous heroine who received the proscribed Girondins into her house, shows us one of those good-looking, neat housewives of olden times, whose hearts were as spotless and well-ordered as their houses. She is dressed in her best to sit for her portrait; her hair is elaborately piled up, and, on the top, is a little shepherdess hat. She has large black eyes, with a slightly astonished look, the nose is thin and regular; the mouth, which naturally would wear a smile, has forced itself to assume a serious expression. A gold cross hangs on a black ribbon round her neck; but under all this finery appears the simple, hard-working woman of workaday life, going backwards and forwards from early dawn, between her stove and her store-cupboard, with the conciliatory good-humour of those economical, loving housekeepers of former days who made the lives of our fathers so comfortable and dignified.<sup>1</sup>

Madame Bouquey was not pretty—she was charming. She had, someone said, “one of those faces that you see without surprise, but that you leave with regret.” Her maiden name was Thérèse Dupeyrat. She married Robert Bouquey, *procureur du roi* at Saint-Émilion—a very ordinary sort of man and sometimes surly—but Thérèse seems, nevertheless, to have been very happy; she was as open-hearted and gay as a chambermaid in a comedy. It was a great time for nicknames, and she was familiarly called “Marinette.”

Her sister had married Elie Guadet, elected deputy to the

<sup>1</sup> The portrait was first published by C. Vatel in his work, *Charlotte Corday et les Girondins*. The references quoted in this study are from the documents published by Vatel.

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Convention for the department of Gironde in 1792, and Bouquëy, thanks to the support of his brother-in-law, obtained from the Minister, Roland, the post of registrar of national domains, with a right to reside in the former château of Fontainebleau.

It was there that the Bouqueys learned of the parliamentary *coup de force* of June 2nd, 1793, the exclusion and the arrest of the deputies of the Girondin party, the flight of Guadet and his friends, and their bold push for the country. The delusion of the refugees was great. According to their suppositions, sixty-nine departments would have revolted at their call, but they were cruelly undeceived when they arrived in Normandy. They reviewed some troops and made a few speeches, but they were already persuaded that France would not take sides in a parliamentary quarrel she did not understand. They only succeeded in heating one head—that of Charlotte Corday—and the mad exploit of that enthusiastic girl ruined them irrevocably. They disappeared, and we hear of them being tracked through Normandy, and flying towards Brittany, without supporters or means of action. They were forgotten.

For four months Thérèse Bouquëy, who was living at Fontainebleau with her husband, was without news of her brother-in-law, Guadet, and his friends, when she received a letter from her father, Citizen Dupeyrat, an old man seventy-seven years of age, relating the sad adventures of the fugitive deputies. They had traversed the west of France, at first disguised as enrolled volunteers, living like soldiers, quartering themselves on farmers. Then they had been discovered and pursued, without guides, without shoes, their feet bleeding; they had hidden during the day in solitary barns, in woods, in marshes, slowly dragging their way by night, avoiding the villages, and yet retaining their pride, convinced that in their wretched, broken-down, hunted personalities they embodied the whole national representation.

They had turned towards the sea, hoping to embark and reach "the land of Gironde," with a certainty of finding there warm hearts and pure patriots. At Quimper they had divided: Pétion, Guadet, Valady, Louvet, Buzot, Salles, and

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Barbaroux got on board a merchant brig, the *Industrie*, in Brest roads one night, and, after an adventurous passage of three days, were landed at Bec-d'Ambès, in Gironde, where Guadet's father-in-law had an estate.

The same day Guadet and Pétion walked to Bordeaux, but came back dismayed. The whole city was terrorised over by the agents of the Convention. To attempt anything was useless; they must wait, and meanwhile conceal themselves. But where? Guadet, who knew the whole country well, did his utmost to find a refuge for them. A lighterman of Bec-d'Ambès, named Grèze, agreed to take them to Saint Pardon, a hamlet on the high road, on the banks of the Dordogne, whence, after nightfall, Guadet made his way to Saint-Émilion. For a long time he wandered round his family home, which was situated outside the walls of the town, amongst vines, on the Coutras Road. At midnight, he crept into his father's house, threw himself at his feet, and begged him to give shelter to his companions. The old man, who was much agitated,<sup>1</sup> consented to receive his son and one of his friends, but not more, having no "hiding-place" where he could lodge the others. Guadet applied to "more than thirty persons," relations, friends of his childhood, or people under an obligation to him or his. Not one of them dared to open his doors.

The others, left at Bec-d'Ambès, lost patience; their presence there had been noted. They left in a body, going towards Saint-Émilion, eight leagues away, by a roundabout road. For luggage they had "a small trunk and three portmanteaus tied together"; they openly carried pistols, sword-sticks and sabres. Guadet senior was willing to give them all shelter for one night, but at dawn they set off again to wander about aimlessly. Like outlawed or excommunicated persons in the middle ages, they found all doors closed against them. They prowled "like wolves" from Pomerol to Saint-Genez, from Monpeyrux to Castillon, sleeping in the vineyards, the

<sup>1</sup> "My son came at midnight, threw himself at my feet, and implored me to give him refuge, saying that, if I refused, he would stab himself. I own that I was moved to compassion and could not send him away. I sent the servants to bed and remained alone with my son. By means of a ladder, I put him and his companion into the loft, and the next day I informed the household that they had left the house the previous night."—Examination of Guadet, sen.



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woods, or the quarries. Their presence in the country was known, and their presence was shunned as though they were savage beasts; they carried "the contagion of anguish," and their appearance alone was sufficient to frighten the peasants. One peasant declared that, on or about St. Michael's Day, before six in the morning, he had encountered "four or five strangers wearing tall hats with white caps under them, each dressed in a brown coat with red collar and lapels, and having a sword-stick, and each, under his arm, a cloth carpet-bag; and that, a minute later, there came up two other strangers, one very tall and the other shorter, each wearing a faded green coat and a three-cornered hat with a white cap under it; and these two followed the other five." The peasant was suspicious of them, and thought "they were deserters." Another stated that "on the 29th of September—a Sunday—at eight o'clock in the evening, he saw seven unknown men, one of whom was tall, but that he was too terrified to notice how they were dressed." Those were the days of "the great Terror."

On hearing of these things, Thérèse Bouquey could not contain herself. Her personal opinions, however, had nothing to do with her indignation, for she was neither a "federalist," like Charlotte Corday, nor a "Girondine," like Madame Roland. We cannot find that she ever evinced any political preference, but she was one of those women who are as ready to fight against unhappiness and misery as a soldier is to fight the foe.

Leaving her husband at Fontainebleau, she lost not an hour, but took the *diligence*, arrived at Saint-Émilion, and soon found means to let Salles and Guadet know that her house was open to them. They came, but not without some compunction, for Barbaroux, Louvet, and Valady had no place of refuge. "Let them all three come," said the brave woman. The following night the three outlaws arrived, tired out, and their clothes in rags. They reported that Buzot and Pétion had been obliged to change their hiding place nine times in fifteen days, and that they were "reduced to the last extremity." "Let them come, too," said Madame Bouquey, but she advised that they should be warned not to come in the daytime.

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At midnight—it was October 12th, 1793—the seven fugitives were assembled in her house. She wept for joy at seeing this disconsolate band—"her brood of children"—and, quite happy, she regaled with a copious supper these fierce men, who, for weeks past, had never met with a basin of hot broth or a welcome smile.

The Bouquey house, hidden between two streets in the shadow of the collegiate church, at the summit of the hill over which Saint-Émilion spreads, was a good-sized country house, intended for comfort though without luxuries. The principal entrance was on the Rue du Chapitre—now the Rue de la République—and was an ordinary door, leading to the wine-press and bins. The front of the house faced a silent and retired garden, overlapped by the roofs of the neighbouring houses. All the windows of the house looked on this small garden—which consisted of a couple of beds of vegetables and an arbour. From a small vestibule a rustic staircase led, and still leads, to the first-floor; to the right is a large kitchen, a wash-house and a wood-house; to the left a dining-room, a parlour of comfortable proportions, and in this parlour a chimney-piece of white marble, bearing the letters R. B. (Robert Bouquey) interlaced. Nothing is changed, the old panes are still in the windows, the doors are of thick oak, the locks have their old keys—those keys which used to dangle in a bunch at Marinette's apron.

The house had an admirable hiding-place. In the garden, opposite the farthest kitchen window, is a square well, a hundred feet deep; a stone dropped down reaches the water with a lugubrious, distant splash, after a long interval. In the masonry of two of the opposite sides, holes have been cut, at different heights, and it is possible to descend by alternately moving each foot into a lower niche. These hollow steps are wet and slimy; the feet slip and there is nothing for the hands to seize. But anyone who risks this dangerous gymnastic feat will find, some twenty feet below the ground, a large recess opening into a subterranean cave equal in size to the little garden above it. The whole of the subsoil of Saint-Émilion is pierced with immense galleries of fabulous antiquity and of uncertain conformation. To isolate their

property, many of the landlords have now built walls across these caves, but formerly it was possible to wander a long distance through this subterranean maze, though it was imprudent to venture too far, for the caverns twine and twist about, and sometimes there are several ramifications one above the other.

Mme. Bouquey "lodged in her grotto" the seven Girondins. This grotto is an irregular, but spacious hall which has its own cellar—a gallery still deeper, reached by slipping through a hole that was usually closed by a board. It was in this second cave, thirty feet underground, that Mme. Bouquey concealed her guests. She sent down there two mattresses, two chairs, a table, some linen and blankets, and the furniture—which at first consisted of only strictly necessary articles—soon increased. To make the refugees comfortable, the good woman would have thrown all her house down the well. By means of a long iron rod, with a hook at the end, she sent them a lantern, books, silver spoons and forks, and a *moine* (hot-water bottle) to warm the beds, the cave being damp, and it being impossible to light a fire. They were also obliged to speak in whispers, for there are treacherous echoes in the unknown ramifications of these stone caverns.

The refugees, however, did not live there all the time. Mme. Bouquey was continually on the watch as to what passed, or was talked about, in the town, and, if there were signs that the zeal of the terrorists was abating, she quickly informed her recluses that they might come up into the fresh air. For those who were chilly or delicate she even found in her own house another hiding-place, more healthy, better ventilated, and less icy. Her guests thus lived separated, but at the least alarm they clambered over the parapet of the well, descended into the cave, and from thence into the "cellar." A spade, a pickaxe, and a jar of mortar enabled them to block up the entrance, and wall themselves in if need be. That was only for extreme cases; generally, at evening, they met round the table of their "fairy," who puzzled her brains to feed them as well as possible—a serious problem.

Rations of corn and meat were allotted to every person in

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the province. Citoyenne Bouquey, as she lived alone, was only entitled to a pound of bread per day. And she had to provide for seven young men, all sharp set. To do without breakfast they did not rise till noon, but their appetite was all the keener. A strong vegetable soup composed the whole of the dinner that Mme. Bouquet lowered to the cave, but the supper in common was more succulent—a piece of beef obtained with the greatest difficulty, for the heroic hostess risked her life in coaxing an extra pound of meat out of the butcher. If meat was not to be had, they ate a fowl (until they came to an end of the poultry), eggs, vegetables, and a little milk. It always happened that the good Marinette had no appetite, and left her portion to the most hungry. She was “like a mother in the midst of her children”—a mother aged thirty-one years—and not the least difficult part of her heroic conduct was to assume constant gaiety and good humour. Round the house where she kept these men—objects of all the wrath and pretexts for all the fury which convulsed France—the jackals of all the clubs circulated, crying the latest news, and swearing they would burn alive in their houses all persons who were guilty of sheltering aristocrats. Yet she was always bright, lively, and apparently careless, though guarding her door, getting wind of intended domiciliary visits, and even taking precautions that watchful neighbours should not notice too much smoke from her kitchen chimney, or detect the savoury odour of her saucepans. One day, forgetting herself, she said to her guests: “*Mon Dieu!* if they should arrest me, what would become of you?”

They profited by their strange, enforced leisure. Buzot, Barbaroux, Pétion and Louvet wrote their memoirs; Salles composed a tragedy on “Charlotte Corday.” They worked all day, by the light of a lantern, in a cave that was more close and stifling than a tomb. It was in this cave that they learned, early in November, of the death of Vergniaud, Brissot, and nineteen other of their friends. Ten days later Mme. Bouquey informed them of the imprisonment of Mme. Roland in the Conciergerie. What days they spent, what tortures they endured in this dark hole, which seems even

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now, to the stranger who gropes his way across it, as though somewhat of the despair and rage which broke these seven strong hearts still brooded over it! These young men, burning with enthusiasm, longing for action, and proud of having once touched the summit of power, saw themselves now buried alive in a tomb, vanquished, powerless, not daring to speak on account of the echoes of the resounding galleries, and a prey to bitter thoughts. Buzot was the most miserable of all, he loved Mme. Roland and knew that he was beloved by her, but the unhappy man was compelled to hide from his companions the anguish of his soul, and sob in solitude. Louvet alone knew of his heroic love, and had sworn never to reveal it.

One evening—it was November 13th—when they went up to the house to supper, they found Mme. Bouquey in tears. For some days past she had concealed her grief. Her relatives, her friends, even her husband, who had remained in Paris, had banded together to compel her to send away the refugees; and her heart was bursting with shame and sorrow. She told them of the intrigues, the threats, the cowardly manoeuvres that had been employed to coerce her; the whole town was threatened with terrible vengeance.

“Cruel men! What wrong they do me! I will never forgive them if it should happen that one of you ——.”<sup>1</sup> She did not finish the sentence, but, lamenting her helplessness, went from one to the other, sobbing. They were already preparing to depart, and said farewell to her.

That same night they recommenced their wandering life. Guadet, Salles, and Louvet passed the following day in the quarries; Barbaroux, Pétion, and Buzot, who had resolved to keep together, made their way through the vineyards, hoping to cross the Dordogne and reach the sea or the Landes; Valady went off by the Périgueux road, where he expected to find a safe asylum. He alone—except Louvet,

<sup>1</sup> It was, it appears, Robert Bouquey, who, less heroic than his wife, insisted that the refugees should take elsewhere “the contagion of their misfortune” (Lussaud, *Eloge historique de Guadet*, quoted by Vatel, p. 380). Bouquey, however, did not return to Paris till December, it would appear from his examination (Vatel, p. 659, note).

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who had determined to return to Paris and succeeded in getting there—was able to leave the Gironde; the others wandered miserably round Saint-Émilion, the subterranean caves of which offered, at least, a shelter from the autumn rains.

Salles and Guadet retook possession of the hiding place under the roof of Guadet's father; Mme. Bouquey ventured again to receive Barbaroux, Pétion, and Buzot, but her family closely watched her, and guarded themselves against her compromising heroism. M. Bouquey had left Paris and returned to Saint-Émilion. Old Dupeyrat had also come to reside in his daughter's house. She was once more obliged to close her doors against the outlaws. Indignant at the cowardice of her relatives, and unable to restrain her generous instincts, she tried earnestly to find refuge for the fugitives, and in their cause was careless of danger and neglectful of precaution. At her entreaties they were sheltered for some days by Citizen Paris, the constitutional *curé* of Saint-Émilion. She afterwards found them a retreat in the houses of some of the inhabitants of Castillon—Citizens Penaud, Mouret, and Coste—who, each in turn, received them. Coste lodged them in a loft belonging to an old convent, above his stables in the Rue Planterose. They were there at the end of December. A boy of sixteen, Sylvestre Gros, who had been supping with his comrades on Christmas Eve, and did not like to return home at such a late hour, thought he would pass the rest of the night in M. Coste's hay. "But when I got into the loft"—he afterwards stated—"I felt three heads, and I ran away. My comrade said to me, 'Don't cry out, and don't talk about what you have seen; those are the three *émigrés*.'"

The zeal of Mme. Bouquey was so contagious that many of the country people became her accomplices.

But she wanted a less precarious asylum for her dear refugees. In the very centre of Saint-Émilion, at the corner of the Grand Rue—now Rue Guadet—and the Rue Cap-du-Pont, was the shop of a wig-maker, Jean Baptiste Troquart. Three sides of the house (now pulled down) jutted out, and formed the most frequented corner in the whole town.

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Troquart lived there alone, and occupied only the ground floor; the first storey, which overhung the shop, contained only one room, "a stinking den" filled with rags. The windows of this room were never opened. It was there that Mme. Bouquey—early in January 1794—sent Buzot, Pétion, and Barbaroux. She undertook to find them food—bread included—and she handed Troquart an *assignat* for five hundred francs, on account, for their lodging.

The room in which the three Girondins lay hidden for five months contained only one bed, in which Pétion and Buzot slept; Barbaroux lay on a mattress. They could not light a fire—"on account of the tell-tale smoke"—and dared hardly talk—"for fear of being heard by the passers-by." Buzot and Barbaroux wrote continually. Pétion remained idle, and, seated in an old arm-chair, either thought or slept. When the night was dark, and the streets deserted, Troquart executed commissions for his lodgers. He went to Bouquey's house, which was close by, or to old Guadet's, which was farther, and took letters, and brought back provisions.

Salles, in the loft of Guadet's house, in a hiding-place so low that he was obliged to lie down all the time,<sup>1</sup> worked incessantly at his tragedy of "Charlotte Corday," and sent, by Troquart, long extracts to his friends, requesting them to send him their criticisms. The drama was therefore discussed and commented on, politically and literally, in a manner not very flattering to the author. "Some of the speeches are of inordinate length," remarks Pétion. "I recommend you to imitate Shakespeare's plays," Buzot insinuates. "Look after your versification; it is careless, even in the best passages," says Barbaroux.

They had scarcely any other amusements. Pétion was so bored that one night he ventured out and took supper with Mme. Bouquey; on another occasion he took his two companions. Mme. Bouquey did her utmost to render "the Troquart prison" supportable. She supplied them with sheets, handkerchiefs, body-linen; she sent them delicacies,

<sup>1</sup> "The roof was lower than that of the house, and formed a recess impossible to get at, and which could not be used for any purpose, being neither lighted nor ventilated, and having no communication with the main loft over the house."—Vatel, p. 665.

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she made garments to replace their ragged clothes. She sent Barbaroux a pair of breeches, cut and sewn by her own hands.<sup>1</sup> In the early spring she also sent them flowers "to decorate their poor and dismal abode."

They believed themselves quite safe, and, as a matter of fact, no one suspected their presence in the wigmaker's house, over a shop frequented by the warmest patriots of Saint-Émilion, who came there to be shaved. But Julien—a young proconsul of twenty years—reigned at Bordeaux, and thought he must do something to distinguish himself. Someone—Nadal, an innkeeper at Saint-Émilion, it is believed—suggested an idea to him. It was supposed that the Girondins were hidden in the quarries, and had found impenetrable retreats there, though no one dared to venture into those dangerous mazes. But at Sainte-Foy-la-Grande, a small town on the Dordogne, seven leagues from Saint-Émilion, there lived a butcher, named François Marcon, who bred huge dogs trained to fight. His pack was feared and famous throughout all the country; "people came from Bordeaux to see them fight." One of these dogs "had only three paws"; it was called "Le Tors" ("Twist"); it was the most terrible of all, and extraordinary tales were told about it.

On the morning of June 17th, 1794, Saint-Émilion woke to find itself blockaded by the 10th Battalion of the Gironde, which had come from Libourne. All the gates were guarded and also the Guadet's house, and every exit of the subterranean passages. Marcon's pack of hounds, brought from Sainte-Foy, was there as well. The Girondin hunt was about to begin. The mastiffs were let loose in the quarries, and everybody expected to see the refugees bolt from their burrows. But no one appeared. Marcon chained up his dogs, and, mortified at his ill-success, took them to Guadet's house, which was searched from cellar to garret. Salles and Guadet were found in a corner of the roof, and quickly bound and taken "to an inn in the town." A similar search had been made at Mme. Bouquey's house, and

<sup>1</sup> "Q.—What tailor did they employ to make their clothes? A.—Saint-Brice-Guadet brought them a blue coat, in a very bad condition . . . and the wife of Robert Bouquey made a pair of breeches for them."—Examination of J. B. Troquart.



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some traces of the "outlaws" were found in the "grotto." At half-past two a cart was requisitioned, and in it were placed M. and Mme. Bouquey, old Dupeyrat, Salles, old Guadet, his son the deputy, his daughter, Marie Guadet, and even a poor little hunchbacked girl, Mme. Bouquey's servant. One of the soldiers who formed the escort related a terrible scene "which occurred when the cart was loaded." Old Guadet was sitting at the side; his son stood near him; he was stricken with grief, and cried aloud, "Oh, father! father! we are going to die, and I am the cause." In after years, when he was an old man, this soldier, "who had seen plenty of bloodshed and was not easily affected," repeated, as though he were haunted by the remembrance, "But what went to my heart was to hear Guadet cry, 'Father! father! it is I who kill you.' There was something heartrending in his voice."

In the hot hours of the afternoon, the cart, passing through the Madeleine gate to reach the Libourne road, descended the Grand Rue, and passed therefore close to the walls of Troquart's house where Buzot, Pétion, and Barbaroux were lying in silent anguish. The wigmaker's shop was filled with soldiers. One of the leaders of the expedition—Oré—had fastened his horse to the bars of the window. No one thought of mounting the stairs and examining the first floor. The three refugees saw through the chinks of the shutters the departure of the procession which was leading their last friends to their death. That night, when the terror-stricken town had again become quiet, they said farewell to their host, and left the town by the Brunet Gate, a curious old thirteenth-century structure, all arches and towers, overshadowed now by an old walnut-tree—a mere shrub in those days—planted on one of the bastions of the bridge over the moat. They were ragged, emaciated, unkempt, and hardly able to walk after long months of confinement. All carried pistols, and Barbaroux, in addition, had a hunting-knife by his side. Pétion bore the provisions—a large round loaf, stuffed with meat and green peas. They knew not to which point of the compass to direct their steps. The nearest frontier was that of Spain; but they were aware that at the toll-house of every bridge, at the entrance of every tiny hamlet, sentinels were

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set who required a proof of identity from every passer—and they had no passports.

They wandered down the slopes of Saint-Émilion, avoiding the villages of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Hippolyte. The spot where they broke a passage through the vines is still shown. They made for the Dordogne, which they hoped to be, perhaps, able to cross; but the nearest bridge, that of Castillon, was guarded, and they would either have to swim, or possibly cross at the ferry at Civrac, which was not so carefully guarded as Castillon. By dawn, the refugees had travelled about two leagues, and crossed the high road from Bergerac to Bordeaux, not far from a farm called Germans. In the fertile plain they saw a small wood of pine-trees, about two hundred yards from the road; between the wood and the road was a cornfield, which they entered. In the middle of this field were two large mulberry-trees, and in the shadow of these the three tired men sat down to breakfast; each marking the place he had chosen by a handkerchief and a piece of bread. It is said that a boy had climbed into one of the trees to pick the mulberry leaves, and being frightened at the appearance of these savage-looking wanderers, remained hidden amongst the branches, and watched them sit down and begin their breakfast.

At this moment, some Volunteers, going from Castillon to Bordeaux, passed along the road. They were headed by a drummer, who suddenly began to beat his drum. The outlaws could see nothing, hidden as they were by the tall wheat, but the sound of the drum made them imagine they were pursued. Two of them—Pétion and Buzot—jumped up, and in a few bounds reached the pine wood and disappeared; but Barbaroux, who, though a young man, was too fat to run, and, perhaps, also tired of a life of fears and dangers, cocked his pistol, put it to his right ear, and fired.

The Volunteers on the road, hearing the shot, stopped, and entered the wheatfield. They found the wounded man “breathing heavily, and tossing about as though he were dying.” His right cheek was covered with blood, and the eye almost forced from its socket. Who was he? They stood around him, but not one of them dared to approach him or

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bind up his wound—the peasants were afraid of the dying man, who, no doubt, was one of those *émigrés* or outlaws who abounded throughout all the country, and, even though dying, he inspired terror. Until the afternoon, Barbaroux—the handsome Barbaroux, formerly so gallant and so much admired, and who used to sprinkle rose leaves in Mme. Roland's wine-glass—lay on the ground reddened with his blood, whilst a hundred inquisitive peasants stood round, and not one of them had the humanity to render any assistance. The municipal officers of Saint-Magne, who had at last been informed of the incident, did not arrive until three o'clock in the afternoon. They had the wounded man carried to the neighbouring farm of Germans, but the farmers would not open their doors. The law was explicit on that point: any citizen who gave shelter to a conspirator became by that very fact, an accomplice, and, in the distrustful minds of the terror-stricken peasants, the fear of the guillotine stifled every feeling of pity. The farmers were asked for a cup of water to wash the blood from his wound, and a little straw on which to lay the dying man, but they refused both. The Draconian laws of the Revolution were turned against the man who in the days of his illusions had been its idol and its apostle; it refused him a drop of water to relieve his agony, a handful of straw on which to rest his dying head; and Barbaroux realised the fact that he was to be an outcast up to the moment of his death.

Though he still retained his faculties, he closed his eyes, as though resigned to die. Four men laid hold of him, and carried him across the fields, followed by an amused crowd, to a farm called "the End of the Alley," which stands by the side of the high road to Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> There also they refused to receive the outlaw, but a peasant, less timorous than the rest, lent a chair, on which the wounded man was placed in front of the closed door of the farm. Idlers arrived from all parts and formed a ring around him. The sun was hot, but so

<sup>1</sup> Tourists desirous of visiting the spot will find the farmhouse still intact, close to the road running from Castillon to Saint-Émilion. Nearly opposite the house is a milestone marked 43.9. The description given by Vatel, though no doubt correct at the time it was written, is no longer so at the present day.

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eager was the curiosity to see him that the new-comers jostled those who were better placed, and there was much shouting, with an occasional squabble. Barbaroux half-collapsed on his chair, and motionless, gazed at the people round him with fixed eyes. The blood had run over his duck trousers, and looked horrible ; if spoken to, he did not reply ; if touched, he gave no sign of life. A lad of fourteen—François Laprade<sup>1</sup>—was one of the first-comers, and did not lose a single incident of the spectacle. Sixty-three years later he thus related his impressions : “ He was a brown man—I mean that his skin was brown—his hair and beard black. He had a long face, and wore a frock-coat. Some said, ‘ It is one of the Paris traitors ’ ; others declared it was either Pétion or Buzot. We learned later that it was Barbaroux. Nothing was done for him ; no one gave him wine or water, or anything else. People were so excited in those days ! I am sure he had only one wound—just above the ear—I touched it myself. At first, there were only a score of persons, but afterwards all the townspeople of Castillon ran up.”

Citizen Lavache, a former mayor of Castillon, a little man of advanced opinions, tried to question the dying man. For a long time he received no answer, but, as he pitilessly continued his questions, Barbaroux at last impatiently replied that “ he was meddling with what did not concern him, and had neither the authority nor the capacity to put questions.” Graillou, a druggist at Castillon, also came and prepared to sound the wound. He took out his case, arranged his instruments, explored the wound—and found nothing. Finally, about four o’clock, some men picked up the chair, and slowly carried the wounded man to Castillon, where they did not arrive until six o’clock. When he arrived at the jail, he was laid on a mattress, and a girl named Maria, belonging to Fonbaud, one of the suburbs of the town, was appointed to attend him. Six days later, the people of Castillon saw him again. This time he was “ tied to a mattress ” ; his beautiful black hair framed his bandaged head. He was taken down the street which leads to the river, and put on board a boat

<sup>1</sup> He related these facts to Vatel in 1867. He was then eighty-seven years old.

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which drifted down the river to Bordeaux. The people, who looked at him from the bridge did not, even then, rightly know who he was. He was supposed to be "one of the *émigrés* of the Chamber who had guillotined Louis XVI." Nothing more! A week later they learned that he had died on the scaffold.

At the moment when Barbaroux wounded himself with a pistol-shot, Pétion and Buzot were running through the wheat and oats towards the little wood standing between the farms of Germans and Pillebois. Hidden in the undergrowth of this wood, they could from there see the peasants pick up their companion and carry him away. As the plain in this spot is very flat, it was easy to observe all the movements of the crowd. What had happened? Barbaroux could not be dead. If he had succeeded in killing himself, would he not have been buried on the spot? We do not know what passed between these two men, whom their astounding destiny had driven to the lowest point of misery and despair. But, when we examine the plain that witnessed their death, we may, without difficulty, picture their last hours. What terrible moments they must have passed! Both, hidden under the pine-trees like hunted beasts, felt their chances of living diminish minute by minute. They knew well that, before the day finished, their end must come, and perhaps they did not dare to look at each other, lest each should read in the other's eyes the fatal resolve. And so, weak, mud-stained, haggard, and apprehensive, they dragged their way through the pine wood. And this was Pétion! this was Buzot! Buzot whom the most Roman of all the women of the Revolution had adored with an heroic love! Pétion—the jovial Pétion—once so proud of his vigour and his popularity, but whose hair had now turned white in a few nights—like that of the Queen, whom he had brought back, crushed and humiliated, from Varennes.

Late that evening, the inhabitants of the farms of Germans and Pillebois heard two shots, almost simultaneous, far off, "in the direction of M. Devalz's wood." They paid no attention to it, but, a week later—June 25th—a man named

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Béchaud, generally called "Baraba," who was returning from Cufal, where he had been to see his sweetheart, heard some dogs growling in a field of rye. He turned aside from the path to see the cause of this growling, and his approach put to flight three dogs that had been tearing two human bodies, which lay, each on its back, a few paces from each other. The face of each corpse was intact, but "black as the back of a chimney." Baraba ran off to Castillon, to inform the authorities. He was so proud of his discovery that he made a ballad about it in *patois*.

The next day, at four o'clock in the morning, the *juge de paix* of Castillon set out, accompanied by the municipal officers of Saint-Magne, and escorted by twelve national guards, well armed. A troop of idlers followed them. They passed through the field to the corner of the pine wood, where the bodies lay. That of Buzot was clad in a long brown frock-coat, with a red velvet collar; breeches of cotton-stuff with blue and white stripes, stockings of spun silk, flecked with the same colours, a black silk kerchief round his neck, and an iron belt round his waist. Pétion wore a similar coat, a white waistcoat with yellow buttons, breeches of "cinnamon-grey velvet, and stockings with large blue and white stripes."

Whilst the local magistrates were noting all these details, the crowd chatted about the event. Close to the bodies lay several pistols—"a pile of them, perhaps five or six, seven, eight." The rye was beaten down as though two men had turned and twisted about, and this led to the supposition that "they had poisoned themselves." Others judged from the slight distance which separated the two bodies—ten or twelve paces—that the two men had not committed suicide, but "had mutually killed each other in a kind of duel," and the fact that they had come out of the tangled branches of the wood and had stood face to face as though to take aim, lent some probability to this theory. But, as a matter of fact, we know nothing, for the official report drawn up on June 26th is not long enough or precise enough to enable us to judge with any certainty. The bodies were in such a "pestiferous" state that Citizen Boulanger Lanose, the sanitary inspector, who

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was officially present, refused to examine them. No one would touch them, but the pockets of the garments were torn open with tools to see whether any papers or money could be found. There was nothing—not a halfpenny, or a pencil, or a sheet of paper—which caused a rumour to be set about that the bodies had been robbed. Buzot had still kept his watch, however, and this was put in a bag, with the two hats and the kerchiefs, which they took care to disinfect by exposing them to the smoke of a fire of odoriferous plants.

Curiosity had attracted a good many people; there were nearly a hundred when, about seven o'clock in the morning, the two graves had been dug and were ready to receive the corpses. A woman remarked that "they were terrible and magnificent men." A peasant named Blanc,<sup>1</sup> residing at Saint-Magne, was not moved to pity by the fate of the conspirators, for he broke both jawbones with his mattock, saying as he did so, "*Rascally émigrés!*" It was asserted that he died a fortnight afterwards.

The two graves, six feet deep, being ready, the carcasses were pushed in, and the holes filled up with earth. The tombs were so close to each other that they formed only a single mound.

For many years this mound still remained, and even after it had sunk down nearly to the level of the surrounding ground, the spot was still respected. The graves of the outlaws were not ploughed over, and many years later the ground "would not bear." The peasants called it the "*émigrés' field.*" For that was all that was known about them. Were they Royalists or Republicans? Nobody bothered; and it would really seem that at this period the people understood nothing about the successive revolutions which converted the heroes of one day into the outlaws of the next. To the minds of the common people, whatever happened was for the best. In after years, when they talked about these events, they contented themselves with saying (alluding to the *assignats*), "It was in the time of the bad paper-money," without trying to understand why the men who were worshipped one day became outcasts the next. It was an ignorance that was akin to wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> Statement of M. Esperon, former mayor of Saint-Magne.

## ROMANCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

In the present day, the pine wood has disappeared, and we do not know exactly where the two *émigrés* rest. The ploughshare has never turned up any of their bones, but the spot can be guessed—within a few yards at least.

It is in a maize field, not far from a little hut which serves to shelter the labourers in case of a storm, and which marks the place to which the edge of M. Devalz's wood once extended. The farm-labourers will willingly show the spot to a visitor; they know that a tragedy happened there, without knowing exactly what. Visitors, moreover, are rare; it is all so vague, and occurred such a long time ago!

The three representatives, Barbaroux, Salles, and Guadet; old Guadet, his daughter Marie, his second son, Saint-Brice Guadet, Robert Bouquey, Thérèse Bouquey, and her father, old Dupeyrat, were condemned to death.

At the trial, Mme. Bouquey, indignant at finding herself accused of "pity towards the unfortunate," was most terribly angry. She stormed at the judges. "Monsters!" she cried. "If humanity is a crime, we deserve death." Then she threw herself, weeping, into the arms of old Guadet.

After the reading of the verdict, whilst the crowd which filled the court-room was applauding or hooting, she, furious and beside herself, pushed aside the ushers and rushed "towards the President, as though she would tear him to pieces." She was removed, foaming with rage. When they came to cut her hair, she escaped from the executioner's assistants. A struggle followed, and "it was necessary to employ violence to hold her." Old Guadet approached her, opened his arms, and pressed her to his breast. Then she burst into sobs, and "emotion brought rest to her heart."

A law-suit which ensued a few years later between the heirs of Bouquey, brought to light a painful detail of the execution. It was necessary to prove which of the two Bouqueys was the last to die, their marriage contract containing a stipulation that all property should, in the event of the death of either husband or wife, pass to the



## MADAME BOUQUEY

survivor. But they both died the same day, the same hour, and almost at the same blow. The case lasted until 1810, when the Court at Libourne ordered an inquiry, and the executioner, who was still living, was examined. He stated that, at the foot of the scaffold, "Bouquey, seeing his wife advance alone towards the fatal plank, said to one of the assistants, 'Ah! give Madame your hand.' But she, quite calmly, earnestly desired to be executed the last, wishing to spare her husband the grief of seeing his wife's blood shed."

I do not know whether, on the magnificent monument—still uncompleted—which the city of Bordeaux is raising "To the Memory of the Girondins," the name or the sculptured representation of Mme. Bouquey will figure. But it seems to me that the effigy of this heroic woman would not be out of place beside the statues of the men whose lives she prolonged for a whole year at the cost of her own.

THE END.



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